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The Battle for Beirut

The turbulence of Lebanese politics used to be containable. Either a contingent of United States marines could wade ashore through the tourist bathers as they did in 1958, or the Christian Establishment could impose a confessional discipline on their followers, or the Arab nationalist powers could restrain and guide the growing number of Palestinian exiles. Now all these equations have been falsified by a war of such ferocity that Lebanon has become one of the actors on the Middle Eastern stage instead of one of the spectators. For every party concerned, both inside and outside the country, the fighting has cancelled their most treasured gains. The Israelis are unable to enjoy the relaxation they hoped for after securing the Sinai border, and have incurred widespread odium by their bombing of refugee camps. The Palestinians are on the verge of losing the only safe haven for their homeless people (and their shock platoons) in the region. The Arab countries which enjoyed a reputation for mediation – notably the Syrians – have lost their ability to conciliate and are suspicious of each other's motives. While the 'Christian' leadership, having lost its numerical majority in the country and some of its cherished hold over commerce, has resorted to tactics and slogans derived in part from the Crusades and in even larger part (in the case of the Phalange) from the Berlin Olympics of 1936. Their present policy of razing the shanty towns of the Muslim poor is a cynical attempt to alter the racial and religious balance back in their favour. This represents yet another unlovely inheritance from the days when French imperialism was able to annex large tracts of Syria and ensure permanent instability for years to come.

But analysis of the past becomes increasingly unhelpful. If Lebanon was just another example of failed power-sharing it would be tragic but not dangerous. What we have learnt, however, from other such failures in Cyprus and Ireland, is that the collapse of the experiment tends to draw in other parties and release new waves of violence and terror. It also tends to diminish popular faith in non-sectarian solutions.

Perhaps the worst long-term effect of the Lebanese crisis will be the extent to which it discredits the idea of inter-communal cooperation in the region. The Palestine Liberation Organisation has frequently given Lebanon as an example of its model of a secular democracy. That claim, never very watertight, is now a mockery. The Israelis, faced with a growing Arab population within their own borders, have been taken by surprise recently in the Nazareth elections and discovered the potential of indigenous Arab nationalism. Already, the spokesmen of the right-wing Jewish parties are citing Lebanon as an example of the futility of making concessions. And the smouldering border dispute between Iraq and Syria, itself a reflection of religious differences between the two wings of Ba'ath, has shown the fragile nature of Arab unity and put them on opposing sides in the battle for Beirut. Should the Syrians now intervene directly, or through their own sponsored 'Palestine Liberation Army', there will be the beginnings of a maelstrom which will inevitably draw in more outside forces. The Israelis could hardly avoid the logic of military tactics which would compel them to secure the western flank of Mount Hermon by intervening directly in the south east of the country.

Within Lebanon, there is something to be hoped for from the Popular Socialist Party of Kemal Jumblatt, which has at least made the attempt to transcend sectarianism and oppose the meddling of outside powers. But this will be futile if it is not complemented by more imaginative moves from Arab capitals. For all their rhetoric about the dispossessed Palestinians, the majority of Arab League states have not extended them a tithe of the shelter which Lebanon cautiously accorded. Instead, with Saudi Arabia backing the Right, Syria the Left and Israel the Christians, all sides have let their power to make peace depend on their ability to make war. If there is to be any just and decent solution to the Palestine question, or any hope of avoiding pogrom and partition, the Arab world and Israel will have to give an earnest of it now before Beirut burns to the ground.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

When the Devolution Comes

Devolution! The very word contains a threat. The English pronounce it to rhyme with evolution, the Scots with revolution. It goes with the danger to the Union, the end of Westminster as we know it, the abandonment of everything we ever fought for. It's an occasion of moment. As Mr Douglas Crawford put it: 'This has been a historic debate, and may be seen to be more historic in retrospect than it seems to be at the present time.' The historic debate rumbled on for four days (not five, as Mr Heath twice said – I've checked in *Hansard* and it really was only four days). On the last day it exploded. It was like a fermenting compost heap, with buried depths of heat, or a haystack that spontaneously catches fire. And when the fire had died down, what was left? Among the major parties, little but a sense of relief that the question had for the moment been shelved.

From the Conservatives, there were varied and startling performances. Mr Julian Amery, looking as if he were about to have a fit, stood with clenched fists, red-faced and gargling. He reminded us that the British nation had 'built up all over the world – in North America, in Australasia, in Southern Africa, and in countries of different races – a British civilisation of which we can all be proud'. The trouble with devolved assemblies was that they always, with the exception of Stormont, went on to demand full executive control. This was what had happened in Canada and Australia, and this was why, unless otherwise convinced by Mr William Whitelaw, he was going to abstain. Shortly afterwards, he, Mr Whitelaw and the Tories did exactly that. What an anticlimax – all that fuss over the weekend, with radio appeals to Mr John Ryman, the mad search for the missing MP, fear of defeat for the Government.

At the other end of the Tory spectrum from Mr Amery – Mr Edward Heath. To tell the honest truth I'm already a little sick of Mr Heath's good speeches. They are easy to listen to. They are well attended. When Mr Heath sits down, the House empties. But what do they contain? Last week, Mr Heath was pointing out that the House insisted on power-sharing for the Ulster Assembly. Even though the majority did not want it, that was what they were going to get – or direct rule would continue. This week, Mr Heath was in a permissive mood. He believed, he said, that if anybody wanted something strongly enough, they should be given it. From the way he spoke, it really seemed that, had the third bench behind him been full of Bolsheviks instead of Celtic Nationalists, he would have been perfectly prepared to concede their programme.

And Mr Whitelaw? Mr Whitelaw had one thing to do, and that was to amuse the Tories for half an hour and simply paper over the cracks. He spoke at top speed, in a high, staccato voice – a brilliant, sustained solo over the general din. Only occasionally did the gramophone wind down, and the voice swooped into the lower registers. Then, with a few turns of the handle, he was back up again, telling the House that he did not have much time, no he wouldn't give way – well, all right he would – only a few more minutes to go, Government's proposals wrong, Scottish people require change, must sit down, please vote for our amendment, but no, won't say what our amendment means – phew, finished.

If the Tories were unwilling to say whether they were in favour of directly elected Assemblies for Scotland and Wales, and just what powers these Assemblies would have, Mr Enoch Powell was relatively clear. Mr Powell is a bit like the ghost at the banquet – paler than the Tories, and a more incisive speaker. He manages to charge the most innocent phrases with a most sinister quality – the expression 'a seamless garment' when it is uttered by Mr Powell is spine-chilling, as also the phrase 'celebrated sleeping-bag'. Sovereignty was a seamless garment, but even though it could not be invaded without its character being altered (how do you invade a seamless garment?), it had, 'like the celebrated sleeping-bag in Captain Scott's Antarctic base', an inside and a skinside. On reading his speech, I find that I am less clear as to what Mr Powell was saying than when he spoke. It was plain that he was against Westminster itself destroying the Union, by creating separate legislative Assemblies. But just where the celebrated sleeping-bag comes in, I have forgotten. I did know once. Mr Powell has the hunched shoulders of a vulture, and he is very convincing.

Mr Edmund Dell, the Paymaster General (not the Postmaster-General as Sir David Renton twice called him), was less convincing. And this was not necessarily his fault. It was the fault of the whole Labour propaganda on North Sea oil. Why, he was asked by Mr Gordon Wilson, were the resources of oil such a dubious benefit to an independent Scotland, and such a desirable asset to a United Kingdom? There was an answer to this, and it was well enough put, but all the time I could not banish from my mind the image of the Prime Minister, on the television in 1974, telling us that the oil was our saviour. Now that it suits them, Labour spokesmen have become realists.

On the Labour Left there is tremendous unease. '*Tribune* has stated its view about the White Paper on devolution,' says *Tribune*. 'We support it as we support those other items which were included in the election manifesto.' That is to say, the *Tribune* Group does not necessarily support the contents of the White Paper: it supports simply the honouring of election pledges. And since the October 1974 manifesto said that 'the next Labour Government will create elected Assemblies in Scotland and Wales', this is what they must be seen to be doing. But they don't like it. 'I'm being careful to be loyal,' said one *Tribune* MP after the debate. The Whips' Office had assured Labour that 'taking note' of the White Paper meant simply taking note of it; details would be changed when it came to producing the Bill, and in the meantime could they just be loyal, please. To the *Tribune* group, loyalty is the best policy.

Another *Tribune* MP told me that he was against devolution. He'd overlooked the pledges in the manifesto because they had come under that section headed 'Scotland, Wales and the regions', in which he was not particularly interested. The *Tribune*ites are hoping that there will be a free vote on the Bill, and they are loyally biding their time, while pushing for referenda which may get the party off the hook.

They do not really, it seems to me, believe in the force of Scottish nationalism. Talking about the breakaway SLP meeting of last weekend, they tell you that the real support came when the Government's economic policies were under attack. The followers of the SLP, they seem to think, are not really interested in devolution. Just as Scotland is not interested in nationalism. It's in the throes of a heady, simplistic, economic protest movement, which happens to have adopted the rhetoric of nationalism. They'd be better off following the *Tribune* line.

Perhaps *Tribune* is right. Perhaps Mr Maurice Macmillan (who has a rather similar analysis – from the opposite point of view) is right. But the trouble is, it is easy to support nationalist movements miles from home (as *Tribune* does). When it comes to nationalism on the doorstep, it cannot be supported without a certain loss of *amour propre*. The SNP and the new SLP have upset the applecart, indeed they have. They are divisive, indeed they are. That is precisely what they have to be, if they are to exist. Many people recently have called out to nationalist movements 'Please hold your horses, please cease to exist'. Precious few have been obeyed. Don't we live in the Age of Nationalism?

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Mary Holland

Waiting for the War

This week a series of Loyalist rallies starts in the small country towns and villages of Northern Ireland. It will culminate in the last week in February – which is, coincidentally, the last week of the recalled Convention – in one of those tribal gatherings in the Ulster Hall in Belfast, with its faded murals of past Protestant victories and the ghosts of Carson and Craigavon whispering in the wings. It is fairly safe to predict that, as the Rev. Ian Paisley leads the crowd in belting out *O God Our Help in Ages Past*, the mood will not be one of conciliation.

If it was Merlyn Rees's hope that, by giving the Ulster Unionist politicians six weeks to think over the terms on which the British Government would be prepared to hand back a devolved government, he might wonderfully focus their minds on the realities of their situation, then he must have been disappointed by reactions in Belfast this week. Far from softening attitudes, the fact that there is only a matter of some weeks to go before the constitutional ball is squarely back in the British Government's court makes it easier for the Loyalist leaders to hold the line absolutely solid. No Loyalist politician is going to risk breaking ranks during this limited breathing space when no one knows what Westminster plans to do next.

The hard fact is that the only thing which could swing the Loyalist coalition towards power-sharing (or participation, or partnership – the euphemisms are endless but the reality remains wholly, horribly intractable) at least during the month of the recalled Convention, would be some dramatic move by Dr Paisley. Even British Government officials admit that any solution which does not include him is just not on. Within the Northern Irish context, more moderate politicians are trapped by the man's atavistic bulk, terrified that if they seem to make any move forward from complete intransigence they will be abused as traitors to the Protestant cause, isolated from their own followers and destroyed.

Even the one or two Unionist politicians of sufficient independent stature to present some challenge to Dr Paisley have only to look at Mr William Craig for any ideas of argument to falter. For Craig, breathing the desperate professional optimism one remembers so well from Faulkner and O'Neill, has never looked lonelier. Last week he was abandoned by the leadership of the UDA, which had originally supported his idea of an emergency coalition government but have now swung to support the Unionist majority. Even para-military leaders must have a realistic regard for the hearts and minds of their rank and file.

Yet, talking to Loyalist politicians this past week, the main impression is one of considerable confusion. They keep saying, as though murmuring some magic spell, that the British Government has approved 75 per cent of their Convention report and that if they stand firm they'll get the other 25 per cent: i.e. a return of majority government with no power-sharing. But, being realists, they admit, when pressed, that they know they are not going to get this. They accept the inevitability of reimposed direct rule and say, along with everyone else in the province: 'It's up to the British, isn't it?' A senior civil servant at Stormont told me he'd noticed an odd thing, that Protestants have now begun to talk about 'the Brits' in exactly the way the Provos do.

Everyone agrees that more direct rule will be a disaster, yet for all that there is surprisingly little in the way of alarmist threats to resist it, possibly because the realities of death and violent retribution are now so palpable that the striking of theatrical postures has become superfluous. Although there is talk of civil disobedience on the Protestant side there is very little heart for

'Kiss me, Hattersley!'

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it. Rent and rate strikes don't exactly fit easily into the Protestant's image of himself as a law-abiding citizen supporting the state. It's more a rebel (i.e. Catholic) tactic. Loyalist leaders admit that it would probably be impossible for them to mount another Ulster workers' strike. The recession has hit Northern Ireland very hard, and with unemployment threatening to hit 20 per cent by the summer, people are loth to risk their jobs, even for Ulster. Hence the irony.

Even hardline Loyalists know that if a referendum were taken in the province a majority would almost certainly vote for coalition government, for anything which might offer even a slender hope of bringing a peace which might in time heal the wounds that have been sustained. Equally, they point out, such a referendum taken on one issue would solve nothing. It would have to be followed by a general election in which the two communities would revert to their tribal allegiances on all the old tribal issues. Some Loyalists say this with a kind of regret – simply pointing out the eternal, unchanging facts of life.

It would be foolish to assume that Mr Rees and his civil servants have reached the end of the road, or of their own ingenuity in Ulster. On the contrary, the danger is that there is a plethora of options, all of which are currently being discussed in Ulster, albeit in a rather unnerving way. People of all sorts and conditions will tell you the kinds of things the Secretary of State might do next, and they do so in an almost academic fashion, interested as observers rather than as participants whose lives are going to be affected by whatever he decides. It is as though they believe that nothing can now halt the disaster which is looming, but in the meantime talking about politics is as good a way of passing the time as any other.

Mr Rees, they say will probably hold a referendum which, as noted above, will not work. He could resurrect Mr Whitelaw's 1973 blueprint and appoint another power-sharing executive, which would fail for the same reasons that the first one did. He could return a lot more power to local authorities, which would be resisted fiercely by Catholics, since it was Unionist domination of local government and the discrimination which resulted from it which caused them to take to the streets in 1968. He could set up a sort of advisory committee with all the members appointed by Westminster. He might even make Mr Craig and Mr Fitt ministers of state to give the two communities some representation at government level, although this of course would not satisfy everyone, except possibly the gentlemen concerned. Some people in Northern Ireland believe that Mr Rees may even do most of these things in turn, buying a few weeks here and a few months there. No one believes any of them will work.

Through all this there is at once the demand that the province is now so battered that Britain must 'do something', coupled with the growing conviction that the British Government has lost all will to do anything at all. So, people wait helplessly for what everyone regards as inevitable: the further escalation of sectarian killings, the almost certain resumption of a full-scale bombing campaign by the Provisional IRA, followed by the inevitable retaliation of the Loyalist para-military groups. They look to the next few weeks, wonder whether the British Government or the gunmen will take the next initiative and what that will mean. At what point all this becomes civil war no one dares to think.

Alexander Cockburn

America's Ideological Right

He is probably the most disliked American representative at the United Nations in its history. Yet within the United States the reverse is true. During his brief sojourn at the UN Daniel Patrick Moynihan has won popularity and banked domestic political capital to a degree unthinkable for any of his predecessors.

This dislike is no secret to anyone who visits the delegates' lounge at the UN, where it is hard to find diplomats who – openly or discreetly – do not despise him as an opportunist and a loudmouth. More interesting is the domestic acclaim he has won, and from what sort of quarters it is coming.

The acclaim is real enough. Recent polls find Moynihan winning immense acclaim for 'the job' he is doing. One poll from Opinion Research Corporation reports that 70 per cent of Americans want him to continue to speak 'frankly and forthrightly', even at the expense of 'tact and diplomacy'. This week's domestic edition of *Time* magazine has him on the cover. At the political level, and despite his furious denials of the notion last September, it is now being taken as a better than even chance that Moynihan will enter the race for one of New York's senatorial seats which is up for election this autumn. Beyond that, the more enthusiastic of his acolytes even mumble about his chances for a vice-presidential nomination, even though – since he has worked for every president since Kennedy – it is difficult to see which ticket he would run on. He would be as agreeable to Reagan as to any of the Democratic contenders.

Moynihan is not a lone comet, suddenly streaking over the political firmament. He is the most visible representative of an intellectual and cultural grouping which has become rapidly ascendant over the last six years. Six years ago, of course, what could broadly be described as 'New Left' ideas attracted most attention and, as one response, cartoonists and satirists pummelled the representatives of 'radical chic'. All that has passed. Forms of conservative chic are now firmly in the saddle.

Moynihan, it has been repeatedly alleged, first earned a claim on the job at the United Nations by an article in *Commentary* magazine, in which he blamed most of the adverse trends around the globe on the Third World. He also had some harsh things to say about the adverse effect on India of British socialist ideas. His boisterous stance attracted the attention of President Ford and Henry Kissinger and his transfer from the embassy in New Delhi to the UN was assured.

Commentary magazine, along with another of even more confined circulation called *Public Interest*, is the home of a group of intellectuals sometimes humorously referred to here as 'the Kristol gang'. Supervisory theoreticians include Irving Kristol, himself a veteran of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and latterly one of those intellectuals – like Moynihan – seen trudging the corridors of the Nixon White House. Among the others are Daniel Bell, most famed for his book *The End of Ideology*, Sidney Hook, Nathan Glazer and persons familiar to anyone reading *Encounter*.

Conveyor belts rapidly shuttle the notions promulgated in these quarters to more popular platforms. Carrying enormous influence not only in business quarters but also in Washington is the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, one of the few American newspapers with a circulation of over a million. The editor of this page – Robert Bartley – tirelessly provides the ideology most congenial to conservative Republicans, whether politicians or businessmen. Aided by contributors such as Kristol, and ideas from these magazines, Bartley and his writers regularly belabour the likes of Secretary of State Kissinger, chairman of the Federal Reserve Arthur Burns and other favoured targets. Earning more acclaim are Moynihan himself, Treasury Secretary William Simon and latterly – with much enthusiasm – Ronald Reagan.

What are the central notions propounded from these neo-conservative quarters? Broadly: that détente is a fraud and the Cold War still a reality, that government intervention or 'meddling' with the economy is disastrous, that the 'failure' of the Great Society programmes of the 1960s indicates the futility of most government-inaugurated social reform. Undistilled but deeply felt resentment at the way the Vietnam war was concluded lurks just beneath the surface, along with bitterness at the success of the Opec initiative on oil prices. This in turn is converted into undisguised loathing for the politics and policies of most Third World countries. House intellectuals of this trend also endorse continued high military expenditure, along with various perennial concerns such as toughness towards criminals and the like. 'Excessive' criticism of the CIA and of covert American activity abroad is roundly denounced. Latterly, even supported by such elder pundits as James Reston of the *New York Times*, we have been hearing much lamentation about the 'irresponsibility' of the American press and menacing noises about the need for its possible supervision.

One locus for all this clamour naturally concerns the present and future status of

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Israel. A fundamental premise of this entire grouping is that unswerving support for a hardline Israeli position is the yardstick by which the stance of the United States towards the Soviet Union must be measured. The end result has been a relatively triumphant alliance, successfully counter-attacking the trends of the 1960s, and which a colleague and I have recently dubbed 'the Right-Centre Establishment' or the 'Military-intellectual complex'. Moynihan is its most prominent representative.

How have more radical thinkers and, ultimately, politicians fared under this onslaught? One interesting comparison here is with the 1930s. Then, in the era of the Depression and the New Deal, the general intellectual and cultural context was heavily influenced by progressive ideas. Such political reforms and attacks on inequality as there were acquired their vigour from such ideas as well as the evident vistas of human misery. Just about 40 years later, as the country struggles in the ebb of the recession, no such context is visible. Liberal or radical thinkers are more covert.

Such thinking and political activity as there is oscillates between two somewhat contradictory poles. On the one hand the need for national planning, and federally arranged policies to reduce unemployment, some sort of national health insurance and care, prices and incomes supervision etc, some nationalisation. On the other, an emphasis on localism, self-reliance and self-help, divorced from the 'bureaucratic paralysis' and corruption of Washington. The labour movement plainly sees its course as lying with the former option, and along with them liberal and radical intellectuals zealously plunge into the planning debate.

But the seductions of localism and self-help are powerfully represented by the attraction felt by an alarming segment of the liberal-Left for the figure of Governor Jerry Brown of California. Brown has zealously fostered an image of personal austerity and counter-cultural kookiness, fingering texts of oriental mysticism when reporters enter his office; but his basic politics are adroitly trimmed to catch the somewhat confused mood among liberals. He talks of the penalties of growth, of 'reducing government', of 'lowering people's expectations'. Recently he told unemployed workers gathered in front of the Governor's mansion to ask not what their country could do for them, rather what they could do for it. They booed him. But even so it's apparent to all that Brown has found one very successful formula and one which, surprisingly, has not yet provoked much denunciation from the liberal end of the spectrum.

It's a scene of considerable intellectual impoverishment, ending up – so far as many radicals of the 1960s are concerned – with very modest ambitions: the election of 'better' Congressmen and Senators to join those who have engineered such achievements as the investigation of the CIA, sniping at corporations and banks, contesting intervention in Angola. But such reforming trends have not found any impressive national proponent. The vigorous and popular manoeuvres of Moynihan and his intellectual henchmen stand in evident, if depressing, contrast.

New York

John Griffith

Blinking Conventions

The most important rules governing the working of parliamentary government in the United Kingdom are three. The first is that a general election shall be held not less frequently than once in five years. The second is that the Government shall be drawn from the party or coalition of parties which can command the support of the House of Commons. The third is that Ministers are responsible to Parliament.

. The first of these is statutory and the other two are conventional. For so many years, single-party governments have been able (sometimes with difficulty) to hold their own in the Commons. But the future of this second rule now looks extremely uncertain and, as a consequence, some other of our constitutional conventions are on the blink.

Take this matter of select committees and their powers (normally given by the House) to send for persons and papers. If a person, other than a Member, refuses to attend, the House may treat him as being in contempt and punish him accordingly. So far as civil servants are concerned, in practice, select committees usually let government departments decide whom to send. Members of Parliament are 'requested' to attend but if they refuse, the House (not the committee) may order them to do so.

So the power of the House is very considerable. Some days ago we were told that Mr Pat Duffy MP, chairman of the trade and industry sub-committee of the Expenditure Committee of the Commons, had invited Mr Riccardo, chairman of Chrysler Corporation of America, to give evidence. Mr Duffy was reported as saying: 'I would be surprised if he does not attend. I have no power to compel him, but what has he got to lose?' Mr Duffy is stronger than he knows. For the House could compel Mr Riccardo, on pain of committal for contempt, so long as he was within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom.

Then the Prime Minister told the House that Mr Harold Lever would not be going before the select committee although requested. Mr Wilson said bluntly that the Government decided which ministers answered Questions on particular matters, and 'the same should be the case with select committees'. He added obscurely: 'It is not a question of 23 or 24 Members of the cabinet being called before a select committee, each to express his or her own view. This Government . . . accept the principle of collective responsibility.'

It is not clear what that dear old convention, so useful in its breach as in its observance, had to do with the matter. Mr Varley, who was well known not to have liked the Government's decision on Chrysler, had already given evidence to the select committee. If anyone should have been forbidden to appear because he might depart from the party line, it was Mr Varley. Mr Lever had manufactured that policy, had he not? But, more than that, how can numbers of ministers all saying the same thing derogate from the principle of collective responsibility? Would they not reinforce it?

Then the Prime Minister said that Mr Lever had 'no ministerial responsibility in this matter'. Here we go with a different convention – how confusing it all is – about the responsibility of individual ministers to the House. But other ministers also share that collective responsibility we just heard about so why should not a cabinet minister, (a) having collective responsibility and (b) being known to have been directly and significantly involved in the making of the cabinet decision, not be questioned? No one surpasses the Prime Minister in prestidigitation. Now you see a convention, now you don't. By the time these words appear the Prime Minister may have graciously permitted Mr Lever to appear before the Select Committee. How we will cheer.

But let us return to those basic rules. See how they all depend on the power of the majority. A committee wants a minister to appear before it. The minister refuses. The House must decide. The whips would go on and the refusal would be upheld. That, we have been told, is the hard political reality. But suppose we are now, for the first time for nearly 100 years, in a situation where the centre will not hold. Suppose, during the debates on the Devolution Bill next session, the SNP successfully moves an important constitutional amendment which the Government unsuccessfully re-

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sist, first in committee and then on report. And the Lords retain it. This should not happen because of the rule that governments command majorities. But, on this issue, in this Parliament, we know it could happen. What does the Government do? Call a general election? Not on that issue. Withdraw the Bill? Very difficult. Advise the Queen to withhold her assent, thereby impaling her on the constitutional dilemma of two conflicting conventions? (One is that the Queen does not withhold her consent to a Bill passed by both Houses. The other is that this is one of those royal powers which the Queen exercises only in accordance with the advice of her ministers.) I doubt if Mr Wilson would consider that embarrassing the Queen was a very rewarding political manoeuvre.

Behind the fortuitous strengths and unpredictable loyalties of minority parties lies that more difficult matter called management of the House of Commons. In a two- or a three-party system there is much to keep alive even a minority government. No one believes that Mrs Thatcher wants an election yet awhile. And what possible benefit could Mr Thorpe derive from one? But for the SNP the sooner the better. And because both Labour and Conservatives dare not move away from the devolution pin-table, and stand to lose so much if they play the game badly, the House might, through the SNP, be able not to bring down the Government but to force the Government to accept serious modifications to its policy. Mr Heath has expressed his fears of the effect which a large SNP representation in the next Parliament might have on the working of the constitution. The crisis may come sooner than he thinks.

If over this issue of ministers and select committees and similar matters affecting the powers of the House of Commons the Prime Minister shows how little regard he has for the niceties of Parliamentary behaviour and for political good manners, some of those conventions which presently uphold him may be found to have slipped away in our new constitutional twilight.

Wilfred Beckerman

Crisis: In the Economy or Economics?

A few weeks ago Lord Balogh, a past economics correspondent of the NEW STATESMAN, retired from his ministerial post at the Department of Energy. Although he has not left public life entirely (he has become deputy chairman of the British National Oil Corporation) it would be pleasant to think that his departure from the Government will enable him to settle down to write his memoirs. They should be as fascinating and as hard-hitting as Dick Crossman's.

I do not know how many political battles Thomas Balogh won or lost; but one battle that he has just won is the long struggle with many other economists about the nature of economics. His victory, however, has gone quite unannounced and unacknowledged. And it is a particularly topical victory since the battle has been largely about an issue that has practical bearing on the current economic crisis and the sort of measures needed to overcome it. This is the issue of how far conventional economic analysis can help in forecasting the short-run movements in the economy or discovering purely economic measures to solve what many people wrongly regard as purely economic problems.

The fact that economics cannot deliver any quick and painless remedies is suddenly being conceded on all sides by eminent economists – economists whose technical expertise is beyond question. According to Robert Solow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: 'One advantage the physicist has over the economist is that the velocity of light has not changed over the past thousands of years, while what was in the 1950s and 1960s a good wage and price equation is no longer so.' His MIT colleague Nobel Laureate Paul Samuelson goes on to say that, in face of the disarray in economic theory, 'there are no signs that we're converging towards a philosopher's stone that will cause all the pieces to fall neatly into place'. Close by, at Harvard, another distinguished American economist, Otto Eckstein, whose Data Resources Inc. has built one of the world's most sophisticated economic prediction models, says: 'We are always one inflation too late in specifying the exact form of the price-forecasting equations.' And his Harvard colleague Nobel Laureate Kenneth Arrow says that one reason why we do not understand the current inflation is that we do not really even know how individual firms behave in respect to prices (which should come as a nasty shock to first-year economics students who are presented with nice simple theories of firms' price behaviour in the textbooks). Finally, a well-known American economist, Robert Heilbroner, says: 'Economists are beginning to realise that they have built a rather elaborate edifice on rather insubstantial narrow foundations.' Surprise, surprise!

The amazing thing about all this public breast-beating is not just that it is nearly as exaggerated as was the previous excessive faith of many economists in the predictive power of the subject, but that it is being presented as a great discovery when, in fact, it has all been said over and over again by Thomas Balogh (and several other distinguished economists). Over a very long period Balogh has castigated the pretentions of the elegant, formal and hence highly simplified models, the manipulation of which was widely regarded as the passport into the higher reaches of the economics profession. For example, his criticisms of the assumptions of regularity and constancy in economic behaviour were on much the same lines as those attributed above to Solow and Eckstein. The Introduction to Volume I of his book *Unequal Partners* (published in 1963) brought together the main criticisms that he had been making of economic theory over many years and predicted and diagnosed most of the detailed weaknesses of conventional economic analysis that are now being conceded by the acknowledged leaders of the profession. If some of the economists who treated Balogh's brand of economics with contempt had been half as good at prediction the British economy might be in a much better state than it now is.

Of course, in saying that the Emperor had no clothes, Balogh has never endeared himself to those sections of the profession who were proudest of their glittering garb. First, people do not like being told that the subtle and difficult techniques that they have mastered and that they can manipulate with superior facility is of no use for its professed purpose of advising on economic policy. Secondly, since, like Galbraith, Balogh believes that most of the received wisdom of economic theory is of little practical value (though it is usually great fun intellectually) and since he has always been, par excellence, a practising economist, he could not bear to waste his time mastering the techniques that he despised. This, of course, sometimes appears to put him at a disadvantage in disputes over the analysis of economic events. Even if he was more likely to be right than his opponents, it cuts little ice to keep repeating that their elegant models could not be sufficiently realistic to be put to any use. He should, he was told, have taken the trouble himself to study the models in detail or, at least, have stated explicitly what particular knowledge he possesses that proves the weakness of specific parts of the models in question.

In addition, like his opponents, Balogh tends to exaggerate. For, of course, he too has some sort of 'model' in the back of his mind of how economies work, even though it would be far too complicated and incomplete a model – mixed up with social and political variables – to be put down in a neat mathematical form. His objection to the mathematical models has always been not that they were too *complicated* but that they were far too *simple* to be reliable guides to reality.

Furthermore, as a practising (as well as a teaching) economist, what exactly was it that he was – and still is – practising if not economics in some form or other? What he practises, in fact, is not just a few 'wise saws and modern instances', but a whole economist's way of looking at problems. As Keynes said, in that famous and overquoted Introduction to the series of economics textbooks that he edited: 'The Theory of Economics . . . is a method rather than a doctrine, an apparatus of mind, a technique of thinking, which helps its possessor to draw correct conclusions.' It may be added that it is a technique of thinking that also helps see the flaws in many of the conclusions of the layman. For even if it were wholly true (which it is not) that, as Balogh said many years ago, 'economic

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theory could offer no more than an explanation of price and income relations in a strictly static state', many of the mistakes of economic analysis made by lay economists are made because they don't even know that part of economics.

Whatever the reasons, Balogh's whole approach to economics has been violently resented in many sections of the economics profession. After all, the apparent success of post-war economic policies could justify a professional pride in the contribution that economics had made to human welfare. The maintenance of full employment until recently, and the accompanying, and possibly resulting, economic growth, had no doubt added more to human welfare than all the post-war discoveries of the scientists and the technologists put together.

It is true that, here and there, sceptical voices were raised as to the ability of governments to manage the economy by means of simple versions of alleged Keynesian economics. First, studies by J. C. R. Dow, Bent Hansen, Robin Matthews, and others suggested that the improved performance of the British economy post-war owed little to fiscal policy. Secondly, the theoretical work of Clower, Leijonhufvud, Shackle and others, suggested that the new-Keynesian, slick, formalised, text-book versions of Keynesian economics, that was adopted mechanistically by governments and by part of the profession, was a travesty of the essential genius of Lord Keynes's thought, which enabled him to extract explicit, revolutionary, and practical conclusions from the acceptance of an economic world of uncertainty and imperfect information.

But the first type of reservation about the potency of the 'New Economics' was interpreted to imply that we merely needed to modify slightly one or two assumptions about how consumers or firms behaved or to try out some slightly more sophisticated statistical technique. The second, theoretical, criticism of what currently passed for Keynesian economics was received with much greater interest, partly because it was intellectually fascinating at a relatively abstract level, and so more fun in a way, but partly because it coincided with the disturbing inflationary developments in the world that brought to the fore the monetarist attacks on so-called Keynesianism, and hence fell on the fertile ground of a general reappraisal of Keynesian economics.

Nevertheless, it has taken the current economic disarray to make a real dent in the self-confidence of the economics profession as a whole. The earlier presumptuous assurance was always absurd, of course. It was worse than scientists in Ancient Greece pretending that they really held the key to the workings of the physical universe and that anybody who doubted it was fit only to drink hemlock. For any science of any aspect of human behaviour is inherently much more difficult than the natural sciences, for reasons such as that given by Solow above. Economics, today, is in a similar situation to that of the natural sciences 2,000 years ago, and the obstacles to progress are greater in many ways.

Rightly or wrongly, Balogh has been unwilling to wait for the subject to advance slowly, through the intervening stages, according to the normal rules and procedures of scientific method. For economic advice is needed – if not always asked – here and now, and we cannot wait another 2,000 years; at least Balogh cannot. But impatience is a human weakness that is easy to forgive.

Anyway, the economics profession need not take on too apologetic an air. First, the current world economic crisis is partly the result of an unprecedented set of circumstances, and economists need not apologise for being unable to provide instant painless remedies for a partially new situation. After all, the scientists cannot even solve a simple new problem like Dutch elm disease. Secondly, insofar as the crisis has been also partly the result of an underlying failure to deal with the accumulation of inflationary forces that was already under way, it cannot be said that no economists appreciated that there might be a complicated relationship between inflation and the social and political forces in modern societies. Those economists who think it is merely a matter of having to recalculate some equation in their models have still not fully grasped the relevance of what is going on in the world.

Thirdly, one salutary result of the more theoretical work on macro-economics and the theory of economic policy during the last few years has been increasing recognition of the role of expectations and uncertainty in economic events. (Indeed, it is curious that some of Professor Hayek's current PROs, who are so concerned to remind us of his views on the alleged incompatibility between socialism and *their* concepts of 'freedom', do not seem to know about his pioneering work in this field.) This applies both to business expectations and to the behaviour of consumers. But it is a part of the current development in economic theory that does not seem to have made any impact yet on the Government. For the Chrysler settlement has probably damaged expectations that a serious attempt was to be made (1) to back winners, not losers, in British industry, and (2) to bring inflation under control without either heavy unemployment and hence excess productive capacity or price controls that, in a cost-inflationary situation, hit profit margins, or both. This can add much more to the unemployment figures than the jobs saved at Chrysler.

The reason why the large public sector deficit has not prevented rising unemployment is not to be found in a revival of old-fashioned monetarist theories about 'crowding out' private investment. This, like other simple and now defunct panaceas that conquered the minds of the Treasury in the past, such as keeping the pressure of demand at 2 per cent unemployment or estimating to the last penny the impact of each item of public expenditure in five years' time, must be left to rot. Much more important has been a simple pessimism in the business community as to the determination of the Government to bring inflation under control without either heavy unemployment and hence excess capacity, or price controls in a cost-inflationary world which also mean a squeeze on profit margins, or both.

Meanwhile, the fact that many eminent economists are now saying what Balogh has been saying for a long time should not be a sign for the whole profession to feel guilty about their inability to supply a magic wand that can restore full employment, rapid growth, stable prices, and a satisfactory balance of payments overnight. There is as much consensus in economic advice as there ever was, if not more – even if this is not saying much. Most economists accept that there is no rapid solution to the difficulties that we share with almost all the other countries in the world; that the Chancellor has to stick it out for a while without either sudden reflation or import controls; that serious efforts must be made to cut out waste in public expenditure, and that we must move towards a more rational system of wage negotiation. Mr Healey seems to be accepting all this, and the fact that few economists would now claim that they can predict exactly how many new colour TV sets would be sold next year if the price were to be raised by 5 per cent, or what impact this would have on the pressure of demand in North Oxford after allowing for the import content of the sets, VAT and so on, does not worry me in the slightest.

Roger Woddis

Odd Couple

(After Walter De La Mare)

'The submarines and missiles the Russians are building could be destined to be used against us.' – Mrs Thatcher, 19 January.

'Who Says It Could Never Happen Here?' – Lord Chalfont's television spectacular, 20 January.

'Would you like to hear a scare?' said
the Thatcherfont,
Walloping the big bass drum;
And the deafening silence from the listeners
Left the Thatcherfont feeling numb:
And a spectre slid out of the shadows
Beneath the Thatcherfont's bed,
And they banged upon the drum for a
second time;
'Have you ever seen a bear?' they said.
But no one took a blind bit of notice,
No chill froze the customers' blood;
What in their minds was uppermost
Was the price of a homegrown spud.
And only a ghost heard the anxious duo,
Heard their *agitato* voice of doom,
As he lay listening in the quiet moonlight
And smiled in his Highgate tomb.
The Thatcherfont cried even louder
And lifted its well-groomed head:
'Tell them it's there in your Manifesto,
Tell them it's true,' they said.
Never the least stir made their audience,
Though they heard the dismal chant,
Describing the awful effects of SALT
And the dangers of détente:
Ay, they heard the Thatcherfont's warning,
But the snow-boot days were gone,
And they switched the new Red bogey off,
And the Old Grey Whistle Test on.

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The Oil Rush – 1

Mervyn Jones

The Men on the Rigs

As we come in by helicopter, the rig looks like a Meccano toy for a giant. The derrick, a tapering tower of steel, rises 90 feet above the drilling-floor, and the derrick-man in his cabin is about halfway up. There are three decks. The top one, open to the winds, has nothing much except the landing pad for the helicopter. The second deck is the drilling floor, where the vital operations are carried on. The lower deck, much the largest, is storage space and is stacked with the lengths of steel that are used voraciously in drilling work. In the middle of the rig, rather alarmingly, there's a cavity and you peer straight down to the sea; this is known as the moon-pool. Doors lead to the operations rooms and the living quarters. Inside, it's much like being on a ship – long corridors, sharp corners, flights of steel steps.

Names for the different jobs are taken from American usage and are distinctly picturesque. The men on the lower deck are the roustabouts; they are general labourers, mostly employed to get the materials unloaded from the supply boats and moved up to the drilling-floor when needed. On the drilling-floor, where the work is rather more skilled, the men are known as roughnecks. The key man is the tool-pusher – he pushes the tools along, keeps the rhythm of work going, and decides (in consultation with the supervisor from the oil company) when drilling is to start or stop. There are no fixed grades of labourers and craftsmen, as in a British factory. Tool-pushers have complete authority in transferring men from one job to another when accident or illness creates a need. Some men complain of being suddenly ordered to do tricky work on the drilling floor which they may never have even watched. Some complain, on the other hand, that they can't get jobs for which they are qualified by previous experience in industry. 'It all goes by whether your face fits,' I was told repeatedly.

Tool-pushers and other men in senior jobs are usually Americans or Canadians. The drilling company is likely to be American, and it was along the Texas coast that the technique of offshore drilling was developed. However, a roughneck who has worked in the North Sea for five years feels resentful when he has to take orders from a tool-pusher straight from the US, whose experience has been in smaller rigs and easier conditions. A feeling has developed that Americans have the top jobs by right of nationality. A trade union official in Aberdeen said to me reflectively: 'Well, in the old days an Englishman would be sent out to give the orders on the Indian railways, and an Indian couldn't get above a certain level if he stayed on the job all his life. Now we're finding out what that feels like.'

Work on the rigs goes on round the clock, with two shifts. Everyone works 12 hours a day (or night) seven days a week. As one man said to me grimly: 'You're filthy, you're wet, you're freezing, and you know you've got to carry on for 12 hours.' It is forbidden to go indoors during the shift; the men get one meal after six hours, eaten in a little hut on the deck, and the next meal in the canteen after coming off work. If a man is needed, he has to work even beyond this 84-hour week. A crane-driver told me: 'I've known what it is to work 12 hours, get three hours' sleep, and be woken up to start again.'

Over the year, a crew is on the rig half the time and on leave half the time. The usual system is a fortnight on and a fortnight off; on some rigs it's only a week, on some as much as four weeks A Canadian supervisor told me with emphasis that there ought to be a law against making the stint more than two weeks – 'the men get tense, you get quarrels starting'. But if the helicopter with the relief crew is delayed by bad weather, the men simply have to carry on. I heard of men who had been on a rig for six weeks.

> To get an understanding of the North Sea oil enterprise, one must see it as a sprawling network of projects – pipelines and terminals and refineries, the building of production platforms, supply bases at half a dozen Scottish ports, sophisticated equipment being made in factories in Glasgow and Manchester (also Texas and Japan). Most of the men who contribute to this enterprise will never see any oil and many will never see the North Sea. But, just as the natural image of an army is an image of combat troops, so North Sea oil means exploration rigs – about 40 of them now, anchored 100 miles or more from land.

Pentagone 82 is somewhere between the Shetlands and, so far as you can see, the North Pole. Pentagone because it has five legs instead of the usual four; a final 'e' because the drilling company, Forax-Neptune, is French. Half the workers are French too, while half – mainly the humble roustabouts – are British. The chartering oil company is Conoco.

We go out to the drilling-floor. The shaft is whizzing round and round, on the same principle as a carpenter's electric drill, as the bit eats its way into rocks 11,000 feet down. Whenever the drill goes down 30 feet, another length of steel has to be inserted. This is called 'making a connection' and is the main task of the roughnecks. The shaft has to be caught in two big steel clamps which bite viciously as the roughnecks hold them steady. It is unscrewed, it swings aside, the new length of steel piping is fitted into place, and finally the hovering shaft is brought back again. The job calls for physical strength, real skill, and split-second timing. If you get your hand in the way of the clamp or your head in the way of the loose length of piping . . . if you slip or stumble or move too slowly . . . you're in trouble. The drilling-floor has walls and parts of it are covered by metal roofing, but round the shaft it's open to the sky. We are seeing the connection made in good conditions, except for the keen wind. It might be raining, and the steel floor would be slippery. The rig might be rising and falling. It might be dark, and in winter it usually is; the drilling floor has powerful floodlights but roughnecks say that the derrick casts deceptive shadows. The supervisor guesses at my thoughts and says quickly: 'We don't get any accidents. These guys know their job.' However, one of the three is very young and it's obvious that he is learning.

After this, I see the mud room. Mud is vital in drilling; it is pumped down as far as the drill goes, and serves to keep the pressure inside the shaft higher than in the surrounding water. Despite the rather contemptuous name, it isn't just any old mud, but a chemical mixed to a scientific formula. The mud circulates, and when it comes up again it brings the 'cuttings' – fragments of the rock that has lain undisturbed for 300 million years. The cuttings go to a room where they are noted by two 'mud-loggers', and where a geologist examines them with a microscope and a fluoroscope. Final evaluation of the best cuttings will be made in a laboratory, so they are kept in little envelopes and put away in box-files. It seems a slight reward for all this arduous work and for an expense of £30,000 a day. And it takes an effort of the imagination to realise that these little brown envelopes may govern our country's economic future.

I wish it were true – as most people seem to believe – that rig workers are earning colossal wages. In fact, although high wages are being paid in certain spheres of the oil rush, these are earned on land, at the supply bases and the construction sites. The men on the rigs earn less. This is primarily because the companies don't recognise trade unions or any form of wage bargaining. Another reason is that the workers in the supply bases are mostly local men, in towns with full or almost full employment, whereas the rig workers are recruited from all over Britain – from the reserve army of the unemployed.

Roustabouts – who are the majority of the labour force – earn £120 to £130 a week, roughnecks £140 to £150, and catering workers about £80. Seen as an annual in-

This is the first of four extracts from The Oil Rush *by Mervyn Jones to be published by Quartet Books in the spring.*

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Costs take a dive

More than ever before, owners and operators of indoor swimming baths are faced by rising energy prices with increasing costs for maintaining comfortable temperatures for swimmers. If pool temperatures are reduced, attendances fall. If the heating and ventilating system is switched off when the pool is unoccupied, the resultant condensation can cause deterioration of the building fabric.

How to save energy and money

Realising the problems, engineers in the Electricity Boards pursued the idea of applying heat recovery systems to swimming pools. In particular, heat pumps had already been used in Germany to produce worthwhile savings. Benefiting from this experience, Electricity Boards have built up considerable expertise, and today heat pumps are a proven method of cutting energy costs.

Basically, heat pumps are refrigeration machines arranged to operate as heat extractors. In an indoor pool, the warm moisture-laden exhaust air contains a great deal of heat which is extracted by the heat pump and transferred at an increased temperature to heat the ventilation air, pool water and shower water simultaneously.

What does it cost?

The extra equipment needed increases the capital costs of the mechanical and electrical services for a new pool by some 15-20 % —but a reduction in the running costs of some 50 % could be achieved. This means that a typical energy cost of £60 per year to heat each square metre of pool surface could be reduced to £30. Savings of this order allow a payback of the extra capital costs in two or three years. Thereafter these savings will continue to be made. Not only of money, but of the nation's energy.

Existing pools can also benefit from heat recovery, provided they are heated and mechanically ventilated. The capital costs of the heat recovery equipment will be higher than those for a new pool, but similar savings can be achieved.

Another example of how electricity is helping to cut costs and conserve our valuable resources.

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come, the rig worker's pay must be halved because he works two weeks on and two weeks off. A few companies pay a retainer for time ashore, but most pay nothing. By comparison, a factory worker is earning steadily for 49 weeks in the year and drawing his basic pay for three weeks' holiday, while a merchant seamen – with a job pretty much like a rig worker's – is entitled to 12 weeks of paid shore leave in the year. During his 'resting' weeks, the rig worker is in reality unemployed, but isn't allowed to draw unemployment benefit because he is not available to take another job.

If the rig worker has a wife and family, he naturally has expenses such as rent which must be met throughout the year; his free food while at work doesn't weigh heavily in the total budget. If he's single and has no settled home, he has to find lodgings in Aberdeen, which are far from cheap. After the strain and isolation of life on the rig, a man coming back to civilisation with £240 for his fortnight's work in his wallet is likely to see it dwindle fast in a few days of drinking and taking out girls. One roustabout, who came from Bristol, told me that he couldn't afford to go back there and he would be paying £32 for his fortnight's bed and breakfast in Aberdeen. Some companies pay fares (including Forax-Neptune for its French as well as its British workers) but most of them don't.

Then, any rig worker has a measurable chance that sooner or later he'll be off work because of injury. He has no guarantee of getting his job back, especially if he is considered to have been careless; he gets no pay while he recovers; and he's unlikely to get any compensation, since he has no union to take up his case and very little hope of proving negligence on the part of the company. In American eyes, he's lucky to be getting free National Health Service treatment.

Work is Always Dangerous

Safety on the rigs has improved considerably since the early days. (So have conditions in various other respects, such as the provision of good waterproof clothing.) At the outset, the companies took the stand that they didn't have to conform to British law on industrial safety or compensation, since they were working on the high seas. They have abandoned this claim, and the new Health and Safety Act – which came into force on 1 January 1975 – has been a notable landmark. It lays down stringent standards and provides for inspectors to visit the rigs. There are not enough inspectors and few visits have yet been made, but rig workers have noticed that things have changed. Stairways have been rebuilt at a more gradual angle, walkways across the moon-pool have been widened, rails have appeared where there were no rails before.

Still, the work will always be dangerous. Supplies often have to be unloaded in rough weather; the seamen on the supply boats get the worst of it, often working up to their waists in water, but the roustabouts too have to keep their footing, watch for sudden high waves, and keep an eye on the crane swinging its load of steel pipes, all at the same time. Being swept into the sea, or blown into the sea, is the rig worker's nightmare. In winter, with the water temperature at four degrees centigrade, survival time is put at a maximum of five minutes. The roughnecks work higher up, but jobs like 'making a connection' place them at constant risk.

A crane-driver says: 'I remember working a leaky crane – there was oil all over the deck. I reported it, but they didn't care. The supplies had to be unloaded. Of course a bloke slipped and broke his ribs. Things are better now, but you never get a spell without accidents. On my last trip a roughneck was hit in the face by a flying bolt and a driller lost two fingers when a cement casing fell apart.'

No Doctors or Nurses

A man sitting beside me on the plane to the Shetlands: 'I've been on the rigs for four years. Myself, I've lost two teeth and had a broken ankle. I've only seen one man killed – that was a crane-driver, the load fell and crushed his cab. They had to burn through the metal to get him out. But I've heard of plenty of other accidents, of course. There was one crane that worked loose and crashed into the sea. The man never had a chance.'

A man on his way home from a Shell rig: 'In 19 months, that's the time I've been on the rig, I've lost two good friends. Both swept over the side and drowned. I've seen two chaps take nasty falls and break their legs. Crushed fingers, cuts streaming with blood, men knocked out with a crack on the head – that kind of thing's normal, it's part of the life.'

Drilling companies have a reputation for callousness. What is certain is that they don't spend much on medical attention. Each rig has 'medics', but they are simply workers who have studied a first-aid handbook, and may not hold a certificate. When an accident happens they'll be at work, probably with filthy hands; sometimes they are catering workers and will be down in the living quarters, far from the deck which is the scene of danger. A large rig may have well over 100 men aboard, and a merchant ship with a crew of that size would have a doctor. Nurses on the rigs (male or female) ought surely to be a requirement. An injured man is taken ashore by helicopter, but the flight both ways – assuming that the weather is good enough – takes four hours, plus the ambulance journey from airport to hospital, a distance of eight miles in Aberdeen and 26 miles in the Shetlands. A recent report by a group of Scottish doctors suggests helicopter pads at these hospitals, and also the formation of teams of doctors and surgeons ready to fly to oil rigs in emergencies. After years of drilling work in the North Sea, it's strange indeed that these proposals haven't been made before.

According to this report, the chance of being killed on an oil rig are twice as great as on a fishing trawler. This is remarkable, because trawlers actually sink or catch fire at sea; only four rigs have sunk, and in three cases the whole crew was rescued. Thus, the dangers on the rigs arise from continual accidents, not from disasters affecting groups of men. The chances of death, the report also says, are ten times as great as in coal-mining and 50 times as great as in British industry as a whole.

The reader must be wondering by this time why anyone sticks the life on the rigs. Some men don't, of course. A man who himself finds it congenial and intends to stay said: 'You get some of them asking to be taken off by the next flight, and lots more who just finish their fortnight for the money and quit. Once a man's on the rig he can see what the risks are, obviously.' The turnover is naturally large. An elderly railwayman in Aberdeen said that he'd seen dozens of men go off to the rigs, but most of them were back on the railway.

'Our lads are no' so daft as to go out to the rigs,' a man in Peterhead said dourly. And if you live on the oil coast itself, where you can earn good money at a supply base and stay at home, you're likely to make that choice. Scots are represented on the rigs no more heavily than in Britain's population as a whole, and most of them come from the central industrial belt. Unemployment is an obvious recruiting-sergeant for the rigs. Here is a job in which you serve no apprenticeship and the employer doesn't ask about your record or qualifications.

Tough But Friendly

For some, of course, there is the challenge and pride of 'the toughest job in the world'. One man said: 'It's hard work, that's true. But I've never minded that and I like an outdoor job – it keeps you fit.' For some, the attraction is found in the self-contained atmosphere, the close friendships, the world of what sociologists call 'male bonding'. 'The food's good, we're all mates together, it's sort of cosy. Mind you, I'm in the engine-room.' Some enjoy the alternation of intensive work and complete leisure – 'it's a nice life-style.'

Another phrase kept cropping up: 'There's no hassle.' It could be said that there's hassle all the time – you can be switched to a different team, or made to do unfamiliar work, at the whim of the tool-pusher. But there are no fixed rules about how to work and where to work, no arguments about piece-rates, and no trade unions or shop stewards to lay down that an individual is breaching conventions or agreements by working at a faster pace or taking a greater risk. You know where you stand,' it's also said. There is a single authority, arbitrary but positive, and an absence of pedantic dispute or complex regulation.

In Scotland, people with democratic and freedom-loving principles see the oil companies as antagonists. The American manager or supervisor is a clear embodiment of the powerful forces behind him. He is usually a Southerner, he is politically an extreme conservative, he doesn't propose to adopt local habits or sympathise with local traditions in Aberdeen any more than in Dhahran, he believes emphatically in 'the work ethic and not the welfare ethic' (as Richard Nixon was fond of saying), and he doesn't hide his opinion that the British don't work hard enough. He is the monarch of his rig. One roughneck described to me

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Power to the People

"It is an indisputable fact that direct democracy is the only ideal form that is practical."

Muammar Gadaffi.

IN RECENT weeks Libyans have been forming 'people's congresses' as a first step towards the formation of a National Assembly. The aim is the devolution of power from central government and the creation of a new system of political democracy at community level throughout the Libyan Arab Republic.

These recent events are the latest in a challenging process taking place since the Libyan Revolution in September 1969, which have included the creation of popular committees in factories and universities as well as towns and villages.

To explain the philosophy of the Libyan Revolution Col. Muammar Gadaffi, Chairman of the Revolution Command Council, devoted the past year to travelling throughout the country discussing political aspirations with the people, and writing *The Green Book*.

The first chapter of *The Green Book* has now been published in which Col. Gadaffi discusses the problems of democracy as it is practised in the East and the West, as well as the Third World.

Col. Gadaffi states: *"A Parliament is basically formed to represent the people, but its very basis is undemocratic as democracy means the authority of the people and not the authority of a body acting on the people's behalf."*

"The system of democracy that is prevalent in the World today endows the member of Parliament with a prestige and immunity which is denied to the general public. The people therefore, have been robbed of their authority – an authority which is now being wielded and exploited by Parliaments."

"No matter how many parties there are, only one policy is pursued. The existence of many parties precipitates a vicious power struggle, which results in the destruction of any positive achievements and socially beneficial plans undertaken by the people. Such destruction is seized upon by the opposition party as a justification for ousting the ruling party so that they may take over."

Proposing a system based on People's Congresses and Popular Committees, the Libyan leader asserts: *"It is an indisputable fact that direct democracy is the only ideal form that is practical."*

"The definition of democracy which stipulates that democracy is the people's supervision of the government, should be replaced with the following definition: Democracy is the people's supervision of itself."

An analysis of the philosophy of the Libyan Revolution and Gadaffi's Green Book appears in the February issue of Arab Dawn.
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how a tool-pusher came into the canteen and said to a man just starting on his dinner: 'That's my seat, boy.' The man pointed out that the canteen was full and he wasn't aware of any reserved places; next day he was on the outgoing helicopter. I heard, too, of men being sacked for objecting to overtime work beyond the 84-hour week. The system is: 'If you don't like it, get off.'

A man who had tried hard to recruit trade union members said to me angrily. 'They're fatalistic. They're like zombies.' Doubtless there was a good deal of truth in his claim that the workers on his rig were too frightened to stand up for their rights – frightened of never being promoted, frightened of being picked on for the most unpleasant work, frightened of getting the sack and going home to join the unemployed. It's also true, however, that there are rig-workers who see trade unionism, rather than the oil company, as a form of authority from which they choose to escape. 'No, nobody on this rig wants the unions to come in,' said a Forax-Neptune man. 'Union blokes don't want to work, they just talk and start strikes.' And a man from a Shell rig, when I asked why he had come to the North Sea from his native Birmingham, said: 'Because there's no bloody unions, that's why. They're always making you go on strike whether you want to or not. Back home I was always either on strike or on the dole.'

Naturally, the companies encourage these attitudes. On a rig belonging to Odeco, I was told, newspaper articles attacking unions and militants are pinned to the notice-board in the recreation room. Jim Dunlap, the Conoco supervisor, said to me: 'Everybody's happy here, there's never any tension or quarrels, and it'll be like that unless the unions get in and start giving orders about who can do what. The companies have just leant over backwards to keep the men happy in order to keep the unions out.'

The unions in Aberdeen have formed a joint committee to organise the rigs. It isn't an easy task, not merely because of the prejudices I've mentioned, but also because rig-workers come from all over Britain and tend to disperse when they get out of the helicopter. Only one company, on a single occasion, has allowed a trade union representative to visit a rig. Generally, the companies say that they will be delighted to agree to recognition when the unions have recruited 50 per cent of the workers. The unions now claim to have reached this figure on the Shell and BP rigs, and it seems likely (as I write) that the companies will agree to a ballot.

In May 1975 a crane-driver named Norman Gardiner was sacked from the Ocean Victory, an Odeco rig working for Occidental Oil. He had made a mistake in operating his crane, but it was a mistake often made before and there seems no doubt that he was dismissed because he was an active trade unionist; the men had elected him a shop steward, though the position wasn't recognised by the company. The unions declared a boycott of the Odeco rigs – Odeco is one of the major drilling companies – and they were thus deprived of supplies, not only from Britain but from anywhere in Europe because the boycott was endorsed by the International Transport Federation. As a result, Gardiner was reinstated. When I talked to him, he said that the battle had been won because of the boycott, not because he had the support of the men on the Ocean Victory. 'They do support me, mind, they want to have shop stewards, but if the company could get away with sacking a few the rest would get scared.' The supervisor had told him frankly: 'There are four men we want to get rid of, but now we can't.' By painstaking efforts, Gardiner has built up union membership on his rig to 27 out of 60 men on board. He was counting on passing the 50 per cent mark soon, but wasn't sure that the company would sign agreements even then.

It is a slow process. Men like Gardiner must wish that they were Norwegians. Under Norwegian law, the companies can recruit labour only through the trade unions, and all rig crews in the Norwegian sector have been union members right from the start, with the right to collective bargaining and protection from unjustified dismissal; nor have I heard that these rigs are at all unhappy.

Next week: Oil's Urban Impact.

Christopher Hitchens

Not a Company Man

When the Uruguayan security forces used torture to extract information from Oscar Bonaudi in December 1965 they made a tactical error. In the room below was a young CIA officer called Philip Agee, and he overheard the revolting noises which are inseparable from such an operation. More than that, he discovered upon inquiry that Bonaudi was among those recommended for preventive detention by the CIA during a 'state of siege' in Montevideo – and that he himself was the agent who had submitted Bonaudi's name.

The story summarises most of the problems raised by the present row over 'spook-hunting'. Agee has since named or helped to identify hundreds of CIA men who are engaged in similar activities around the globe. One of the cast – though not one of those named by Agee himself – has since been shot dead in Athens, probably the most anti-American city in Europe since the fall of the junta. Agee unrepentantly says that if one of *his* named agents were to be killed, then his response would be 'he should have gone home'. He also claims that when he was an agent in Latin America in the Sixties 'we forged and released phoney documents alleging that troublesome people were in the KGB. We wanted them to leave town and that's what I now want the CIA to do'.

By this means he hopes to 'prevent the Pinochets of tomorrow and undermine the ones of today'. In his own view his recent role, therefore, has been not so much journalistic enterprise as a deliberate strategy to destabilise his former employers. If they can be forced into the swift recall and recycling of agents, who can then be tracked to their new posts and exposed anew, he calculates that the American ability to intervene in support of dictatorships will be usefully impaired.

What about the Russians? Agee's reply to the question is that he has not talked to the KGB since he left the CIA, where it was part of his job. *Pace* Lord Chalfont, he does name KGB agents (Sergei Borisov for one) in his book. And he says: 'The surest way to encourage Russian expansionism is for the CIA to go on behaving as it has around the world for the last 25 years.' As far as direct assistance to the Russians is concerned, Agee feels that those, like Philby, who have gone in for it are 'not their own men any more'.

Another obvious reservation concerns the rectitude of anybody who has ever been a secret agent of any kind. How could he have stuck it so long, and why should anyone trust him again? 'Well, I had a Jesuit education, a privileged home, a conservative university career during the McCarthy period of the Cold War, and the CIA was more adventurous than ordinary military service. Also I believed in the reforms we proclaimed in the Alliance for Progress.' He soon began to admire the forces of opposition that he was being paid to disrupt.

A young-looking 41-year-old, Agee lives with a Brazilian girl whom he met some time after his defection, and who had herself suffered first-hand experience of torture in her home country. The CIA station chief in Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia at that time was David Phillips, who has since resigned from the agency himself in order to campaign for its public image and its peace-keeping role.

In a BBC television confrontation with Agee two weeks ago, Phillips made two revealing remarks. The first was in disagreement with those who say that the KGB would benefit from the revelations. 'There's a code of conduct between intelligence officers round the world. You might see a Soviet officer at an embassy reception and say to him "Hello, Igor, how's the cultural business?" and he would smile.' Later in the argument Phillips made his real opposition clear: 'Kim Philby, I have no question in my mind, told his Soviet friends the names of all the British intelligence officers that he knew, but Kim Philby never went so low as to name all his old friends in public abroad.' The implication is clear enough. Facts about power and its exercise must be kept within a charmed circle.

Can it really be that simple? Is Agee just a nice guy who signed up for 'The Company' in the prehistoric period before Vietnam, with the kind of 'motivation' which later took him out again? Certainly there has been no indictment for treason taken out, no allegation by any named source (though various anonymous ones about alcoholism and instability) that his resignation was stage-managed. 'Thank God,' he says, 'that I don't have the drink or neurosis problems so many agents get. Maybe if I'd hung on . . .'

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London Diary

☐ Forgive me picking up Crucifer's point of last week, but if it is true that most newspaper foreign-correspondent narks are held to be hireling spies and agents, then I must declare interest, because I have been grievously missing out. You will remember that my old colleague and mentor Louis Heren of *The Times* newspaper, in whose company I waged many a foreign campaign against the palefaces, had a go at a certain Bernard Nossiter of the *Washington Post* who was quoted as saying, for all the world as though he knew something about it, that many British journalists working overseas 'are undoubtedly on the payroll of the Secret Intelligence Service'. Lou Heren rejects this scornfully. Then up from the woodwork of the *Sunday Telegraph* pops Peregrine Worsthorne, our much-beloved peevish prophet of the perverse, saying jolly good show, quite right, bit of espionage on the side, patriotic duty; what sort of a world is it where Alger Hiss goes free and decent chaps in the CIA are pilloried?

☐ Well, perhaps this Mr Nossiter knows more than Louis Heren and I do. I worked for many years, as did my Uncle Louis, in the troublesome trade of foreign reporting, and if any of my *chers collègues* were on the game I never tumbled to them. But then I never caught on to Kim Philby, except sometimes to wonder how he held down one job, let alone three. I am sure I would have bribed easy, especially in those hard-up days, but nobody tried. Only right here in London did I get a pass from a Foreign Power, and that is putting it a bit high. There was one elderly and rather simple-minded communist diplomat who adopted me, it seems, because I had recently been in the Middle East. He continually took me to lunch, in a particularly frowsty and dull old restaurant in Piccadilly that communist agents love, because no one else in their senses would ever go there, and he would pump me in a painstaking style that would have been thought a bit corny in the days of E. Philips Oppenheim. What was the *sincere* feeling in Israel? In Egypt? What was the true under-the-scenes, no? He was a very decent old guy, so I would tell him what it said in that day's *Guardian* leader, or maybe last week's NS, and he would swallow it gratefully. For this I was repaid by more and more luncheon invitations, until by God's grace he was recalled, and I didn't have to go any more. What a brush with the underworld. Just wait till I next meet John Le Carré.

☐ Strange and rather upsetting how one's values change over the years. Some causes are lost causes. We should know about that; the British have been accepting them for a generation, usually *post facto*. It is patently obvious that sooner or later we shall pull the army out of Ireland, and the oftener Mr Rees and Mr Wilson deny it the nearer the day comes. Whether that will be a good or a bad thing is not the point; only that it is absolutely certain to come to pass, and one hopes somebody is making provision for it, knowing with a fair certainty that they aren't. This has been the story of our colonial life. India, Ghana, Kenya, Cyprus – the pattern was totally predictable, because we never learned a blind thing; it was always going to be OK next time. Naturally it never was. Ireland is only the end of the line. It is complicated by being just round the corner, which makes it seem domestic. This geography obscures the fact that the Ulster Loyalists are just as loyal as the White Rhodesians, and the brutalists of the IRA are just as unpleasant as the Mau Mau. The analogy is pretty accurate, if anyone thought about it. Trouble is, the only visible blacks are in the British Army; a paradox I wish some TV reporter would catch on to. We hang on in Ulster because there will be a blood-bath if we leave. We pulled out of India and the subsequent blood-bath would have eliminated half of Ulster. We pulled out of Cyprus with the most formal of treaty obligations to protect its integrity; The Turks farted in our faces and we said: 'Oh dear me.' We left Africa distributing constitutions and Speakers' wigs and so on; they couldn't wait to hand the pantomime over to the Colonels. We presented a rather boring commercial colony in Singapore to a very nasty little police state. The simple lesson for all colonialists is: you can't get out gracefully, because while you were there you never tried. One is obliged regretfully to put a lot of blame on God. If He created man in his own image, He must have been a proper schizo.

☐ The records say that more than 110 million people live in Japan. I cannot believe it. I should say that if any of us went to Japan tomorrow we would find the place half-empty. Every Japanese seems to be over here. In London they abound; not just in the obvious places; they live in the Underground, you find them in extraordinary places like North Acton and Tufnell Park. I was in Manchester this week; there were Japanese round every corner. Not 'a Japanese'; nobody has ever seen a solitary Japanese; they move around in inseparable groups, taking one another's photograph. A couple of weeks ago I was in an Italian village outside Naples, a place of totally no renown or significance; I couldn't get into the one little restaurant because it was full of 98 Japanese. I was told that around Christmas a couple of Japanese tour-groups turned up in *Hull*. This is far from being a complaint or criticism; the Japanese are the most courteous and un-troublesome of people, though certainly inscrutable. But what in God's name can they be doing here? Years and years ago when I thought Japan was a sort of heaven (only because we got leave there from Korea) I remember one of the countless Michikos or Yamakos with the *sake* cups saying: 'I love you, because you are the only mens even worse boring than us.' Can that be the reason?

☐ Much as I love Barbara Castle, and loyal as I am as a liegeman to the National Health, with good reason, I wish she wouldn't provoke those medical mandarins by raising ambiguous new dilemmas in the Middle East, of all places. To do the doctors justice, it has to be said that in Saudi Arabia she did give the impression that all these rich Arabs one sees in Harley Street limousines will be permitted to put one over the ordinary NHS customer. I am quite sure that is not what she meant, but that's how it sounded, or that's how they made it sound. I dare say the Saudis were so startled at the sight of a female woman in public life they misheard her; I hope so. Let us by all means welcome thousands of Arabs here for their prostates or their pacemakers, so long as they go to the enormously expensive private joints available. I shall always think that the NHS is the great accomplishment of the generation, and the Castle-doctors row is, or should be, an irrelevance. Let's put it on record that I personally (and I am a bit of a regular) have never met anyone in any hospital who thought otherwise.

'What are you doing this evening, nurse?'

'Just yo' bedpan, honey.'

That takes love.

☐ How vulnerable are we all to the imbecile pressure of public relations. Mesmerised by all the publicity, I went like everyone else in the world to see the movie *Jaws*, complete with family. It was on at our local. We were told in advance that there were queues a mile long; *The Times* newspaper itself said that touts outside were asking £5 a ticket. However, we went. There was no problem whatever, we doddled in with our bags of crisps and waited to be horrified. I was profoundly shocked to be so unmoved. At least half the footage would have done very well for children's TV about four in the afternoon. The loveable old rubber shark was about as terrifying as King Kong. All the famous castration-complexes and so on eluded me. I have been far more shocked by *Tom and Jerry*. I am sorry to be bitchy, but the PR boys have asked for it. If you want a really nasty story about sharks, let me tell you of the time when I was persuaded to go out shark-fishing from the Seychelles where the professional used live puppies on the hook as bait, because they bled best. That nobody would *ever* show. Human legs and tits okay, but what about a week-old puppy on a hook? I dare them.

James Cameron

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ At one of Walsall's 150 schools the tawse was found to have been used 500 times since 1973. It was given to children, between the ages of seven to 19, on the bare hands or a clothed backside. Defending its retention, the education chairman said it seemed appropriate since the town had always had strong links with the leather trade. – *Sunday Telegraph* (Keith Norman)

☐ 'More people consult horoscopes than Bibles,' the Rev John Stott complained yesterday. He added: 'It is extraordinary how many people in Britain are superstitious.' – *Sun* (M. Johnson)

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David Hutt

Sacked at Sixty

My father must be turning in his grave. At least, he would be if we hadn't had him cremated. Still, there must surely be some agitation of particles in the field where the dust lies scattered. For my father didn't believe in the welfare state for the middle classes. Compelled to enter National Insurance in 1948, at the age of 62, he promptly dropped out again at 65, instead of staying on to qualify for a profitable pension, mainly at public expense. And now, here am I, also in my sixties, shamelessly registering at the Employment Exchange on Thursdays, and finding my giro cheque in the letter-box on Saturdays. So, as more and more middle-class gents face the prospect of joining the queue, what is this previously unthinkable event really like?

For a start, everyone asks: 'How did you break it to your wife?' Of course, that problem was about the first thought to penetrate the shock barrier as I put down the letter spelling out the message that our future had been suspended. As it happened, she was, unusually, picking me up at the office. So, I didn't immediately tell her in case she ran into a pedestrian, a lamp-post or a bus, while in a state of numbed incordination. Arrived home, she went straight into the kitchen, and, again, I'd to avoid accidents with boiling water, hot plates and so forth. But, the longer the delay, the worse the difficulty. Fortunately, I was rescued as we sat down to eat, by her reference to a job we'd intended to have done on the house. 'I think,' I heard myself saying, 'we'd better leave over all fresh capital expenditure for the moment, as I got the sack, this morning.' Then I took a deep breath. The worst was over.

Yet, even now, though it's a year since I opened the letter, I still don't, deep down, understand and accept that I've lost my job. I doubt whether I ever shall: it remains a dream in which I'm living, unsettled, disturbed, with no foreseeable ending; but, surely, sooner or later, I'll wake up. Indeed, even after a year, I do still wake many mornings, heave a sigh of relief over the fading nightmare, and, only as I contemplate getting up and going to work, is it borne in on me that I don't any more; the world has been turned upside down. This is no fantasy, and, as the national economic outlook goes daily from bad to worse and inflation makes personal planning impossible, the unreality of a future I can no longer hope to control, brings back the trance-like quality.

But on to the mechanics of the operation. 'Here's the form to fill for the Professional Register,' said the man behind the counter. I duly wrote up the required information and sent it off to Regional HQ. Back came the official word, 'You have been matched against all the vacancies currently held at this office; no openings suitable have been identified.' I didn't suppose they would be. However, read on. 'It does seem unlikely that we shall be notified of any vacancies to meet your requirements.' Indeed, I am, at 60, like a keen young fellow of 5ft 5in, trying to get into a police force with a minimum height requirement of 5ft 10in, an embarrassment.

And three months later they write again to ask me if they may take me off the register, which, clearly, I am cluttering up uselessly. I agree, and trot round to see the Careers Officer again. 'Tell me, frankly,' he says, 'man to man. Do you really want a job? Or are you just ticking over on a company pension until you reach 65 and qualify for the National Insurance pension? If so, I won't waste my time looking.' I assure him that I need income, and he promises to let me know. In the meantime, I find myself the sporadic odd job, a lecture here, an article there. So, when concerned friends inquire, I can answer, 'I'm knocking along'.

I rejoin the Thursday queue. By now, some of the faces are familiar. We nod, and grumble together about the inefficiencies of the system. We inspect the newcomers. We, as regulars, are polite to the counter-clerks. We smile; they smile back, relieved to see us. And well they might be. For my first surprise was the level of rudeness and aggression by some of the casual claimants. I seek to excuse them on the grounds that they're probably trying to bolster their damaged egos. The counter-clerks, for their part, take it with Christian forbearance. I can only suppose they are trained to do so. As one of the club members remarks: 'The truly awful thing would be if they offered you a job on their side of the desk.' Yes, indeed.

Meanwhile, this is a very time-consuming process. They've lost my papers twice, and I've waited for over an hour longer than usual, while they hunted unsuccessfully. I can understand the outbursts of anger from some of the customers. I get into conversation with a fellow member. It turns out that he's an engineer. After years of experiment, he's just invented and patented a machine for use with livestock on farms. Everyone agrees it's a winner; fortune beckons. Then, at the crucial moment, livestock farming goes bust; no one is spending money; development stops on his project. I make sympathetic noises.

One of the regulars comes in, the week after Christmas, smoking a Churchill-size cigar. Well, I think to myself, after all there's no means test: this is an insurance benefit: he's not necessarily hard up. But, no. The muttered conversation reveals that he's applying, in addition, for supplementary benefit. Oh well, perhaps a Christmas present. Still, a bit tactless. Ego-boosting, again, no doubt. A new lad behind the counter, this week, very unsure what to do when I declare that I've earned on two days, and only want to claim for four. He refers to the experienced lady running the next box. She glances up, sees it's me, and charmingly sets his mind at rest. 'He knows what to do,' indicating me. 'He'll tell you.' Recognition at last; I'm no longer faceless, anonymous.

We have our pathetic moments, too. A ruck of red-faced, donkey-jacketed, burly fellows, smuggling what looks like a Rugby ball. From their accents, I deduce that this must be the Irish pack, rehearsing a move designed to bring the championship back to Landsdowne Road. Not at all; they turn out to be a scrummage of alcoholics, the smuggled object, a bottle, and, as they bend together, they swig and pass it on. I can't imagine they have any stamps on their cards; they've come in out of the cold. Sure enough, when the reach the counter, they've not a card between them, and off they shuffle, grinning foolishly and shouting.

By now, I'm reaching the end of my 156 days on Earnings Related Supplement. Then, it will be the balance of the 312 days on basic benefit alone, and, after that, I'll be down to my casual earnings, my very modified pension, and my handshake. It could be a great deal worse. At the rate I'm going, the casual fees will bring me into line to be clobbered by the new self-employed tax. But, as the purchasing power of my unindexed pension falls over the next three years, probably by over an inflationary half, I'll need ever more work to maintain me in that state to which I've been accustomed. And, I doubt whether I'll find it in a run-down national economy. The prospect is not very ego-boosting or middle-class.

But then, this is not exactly a proud and dynamic middle-class era. It's as well my father didn't live to see it: he'd never have understood. And, though I may think I understand, I'm not at all sure that I'll ever quite learn to love my egalitarian metamorphosis.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Praise Ye the Lord

I grieve, though not perhaps very deeply, that the days of smart winds are over. Victorian and Edwardian travellers used to be, when abroad and in okay places, in a state of permanent excitement about them. There was the Föhn, which created a bother in northern Italy and Switzerland. There were the Sirocco, that well-known hazard of the Mediterranean, and the Mistral, which can make such a nonsense of the South of France. It has occurred to me that any once popular English resort, temporarily down on its luck, might revive interest in itself by inventing its very own wind. Bournemouth's could be the dreaded Flatella, a doom-laden breeze which rises, and no man can explain why, in the wooded hills near Tolpuddle and, moving relentlessly

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South East, pours itself down the Chines and into the very heart of Bournemouth, engulfing the inhabitants in gloom and despondency. It would provide a talking-point for chic visitors: 'My dear, we were *so* lucky. The very day we arrived, the Flatella had blown itself right out!'

The thing to do with winds is to miss them, to be elsewhere, but there was no missing the icy wind that blew, for six months of the year, through the streets and over the playing-fields of Oundle, that jolly and effective school in Northamptonshire, which for beauty of town, village and countryside is one of England's most under-rated counties. Our wind was called, quite simply, the North Wind and it came direct from the Pole. To the north and east of Oundle lay flat fens and the Soke of Peterborough and that gaunt, grim cathedral, all of negligible value as wind jammers. For half the year we shivered and shook.

It would ill become me at this late stage to take a side-swipe at those who in my youth struggled to educate me. Indeed, I have nothing but gratitude for the golden oldies who dispensed history, maths, frog and other necessities. I was not, as has been only too apparent over the last 40 years in these pages, scholar material. Frivolous stuff I was. But if I did have a small complaint, it would concern the question of religious observance and instruction.

As in the unforgettable *If* (the film, not the poem), the chapel and the OTC were in the same capable hands (he was known as the Church Militant). Another master in holy orders had himself, pluckily, and just for the duration, unfrocked, or whatever, in order to go off and drop bombs on the Germans (and he was known as 'For What You Are About To Receive'). Between the chaplain and the headmaster (I speak of the Twenties and Thirties), a daunting Sunday programme was arranged that nowadays must seem almost unbelievable.

Holy Communion (not compulsory) was at 8 a.m. and if you attended it you had to run all the way back to the house to be in time for Morning Prayers at 8.45. We knelt in the dining-room, while the porridge grew cold and sullen before our half-closed eyes, and the General Confession was always included, which took care of any Saturday evening indiscretions. Matins, frequently with sermon, was from 10 to 11, and there was a scripture lesson from 12 to 1. Six p.m. saw us all at Evensong and often singing *Abide With Me*, known to the wittier boys as the dentists' hymn because of the line 'Change and decay in all around I see'. From 7.30 to 8.30 there was scripture preparation, when we either learned the Beatitudes by heart or wrote a thoughtful essay on which sin we considered to be the most disastrous (such a *choice*, there was). Then there were House Prayers again, with the General Confession (Sunday afternoon infelicities) and a hymn.

If you wanted further confabs with the Maker, you could say your private prayers on retiring. All this tots up to nearly five hours, and to accomplish it we were attired from head to foot in deepest black. The result? Agnostics by the cart-load. Modern schoolboys, grumbling about one compulsory church service a week (the average, I gather) should count their blessings.

One had, of course, to fight back and invent little merry moments for oneself, There were the Chapel Stakes, when we betted on which master would be the first to rise to his feet after the final Blessing. There was fun to be found in the hymns ('Gladly, Thy cross-eyed bear'). There was a complicated cricket game during the headmaster's outstandingly dusty sermons (whenever he removed his glasses, a wicket went down). I managed to make our home-made school Litany tolerable by combining pleasurable thoughts of the holiday treat (always a theatre matinée) with the relief afforded by ailments, grave or trivial, which got one off work and chapel and into the kindly hands of matron.

For Jack Buchanan, Cicely Courtneidge and Beatrice Lillie,
We thank Thee, oh Lord.
For Marie Tempest, Lilian Braithwaite and Binnie Hale,
We thank Thee, oh Lord.
For Delysia and Yvonne Arnaud,
Nous Te remercions, Seigneur.
For impetigo, pink eye and German measles,
We thank Thee, oh Lord.
For broken legs, influenza and the humble chest-cold,
We thank Thee, oh Lord.
For Miss Wibberley, Miss Pilkington and Miss Buick,
We thank Thee, oh Lord.

One happy Michaelmas term, the first two Sunday preachers were discovered to be called Wild and Woolly. Little things like that helped.

A chance came to put some of this right. After Cambridge, I returned to Oundle as a master and found myself, at two days' notice, presiding at a scripture lesson. Twenty docile scientists faced me and our 'set book' was the Gospel of St Matthew. I was panic-stricken as to how to extract lightness and enjoyment from this rather arid material and we spent the first lesson solemnly reading, turn by turn, the text. Alas, it failed to grip. When, on the second Sunday, we started off reading again, I saw despair on every face. It was unbearable. So I stopped the boy who was reading and said: 'Oh dear, isn't this dreadful! What *are* we to do?' A polite silence fell.

There had recently been published *Brave New World*. It had caused a stir. We abandoned St Matthew and we read and discussed Aldous Huxley. Despair disappeared. We then passed on to *The Green Pastures* and acted scenes from it (considerable competition for the role of De Lawd). We read Lytton Strachey. We read H. G. Wells. We read Stella Gibbons. We read anything that wasn't St Matthew. The Headmaster, a delightful man, heard what was going on but kindly looked the other way. Even the end-of-term exam result (an average of 7 per cent and three boys scoring 0) went by without comment. One doesn't want to take any sort of swipe at a school as understanding as that. Warm-hearted they were, and that North Wind blew in vain.

IS BRITAIN A FAIR SOCIETY?

Are we the most class-conscious country in the world?
Who owns most of the nation's wealth?
What could be fairer than fair shares?
And what about the workers?
The recent series of articles in The Daily Telegraph on these and other related questions created wide public interest. They are now available in one booklet, 'Is Britain a Fair Society?' obtainable only from Dept. B, The Daily Telegraph, 135 Fleet Street, London EC4P 4BL. Price 30p, plus 10p p & p.

The Daily Telegraph

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Letters to the Editor

The View From Moscow

Sir, In his article 'What's Wrong With Socialism?' (NS 19 December) Auberon Waugh cites facts which have nothing to do with Soviet reality.

First, no one has ever banned in any document the right of Soviet workers to strike. Neither civilian nor criminal legislation, nor the rules of the Soviet trade unions nor resolutions of the AUCCTU contain any mention that strikes are banned. The workers are the masters of the enterprises in the Soviet Union and the means of production became public property 58 years ago. That is why, while having the right to strike, the Soviet working people do not resort to it as they would thus be striking against themselves.

Secondly, Mr Waugh claims that the average monthly wage of a Soviet worker is £22.50 (i.e., about 35 roubles according to the current rate of exchange). The author has reduced it by almost 300 per cent! According to the Central Statistical Board of the USSR, the average monthly wage or salary of Soviet factory and office workers is 144.50 roubles, or more than £93. More, the draft of the new Five-Year Plan for 1976-80, which has been submitted for public discussion, envisages that the average wage of the Soviet worker is to reach 170 roubles (about £110). Old-age pensions are also to increase (men are eligible for an old-age pension at 60 and women at 55).

Also absolutely erroneous is the claim of Mr Waugh that Soviet workers are expected to work a number of Saturdays and Sundays 'for nothing'. A rudimentary knowledge of Soviet labour legislation would prove sufficient to learn that work on Saturdays and Sundays as well as on national holidays is paid twice the average amount.

It is hard to imagine where Mr Waugh has borrowed his conclusions as to the Soviet workers 'having little to eat' and that their education and health services operate at a 'fraction' of the British level. Mr Waugh seems to 'overlook' the fact that free and *compulsory* secondary education is in effect in the Soviet Union. Workers are provided with broad opportunities for continuing their education. There are special preparatory classes and evening departments at colleges and universities and most of their students are workers. I am not aware of where Mr Waugh has got the idea that Soviet workers 'have little to eat'. Keep in mind that prices of foodstuffs are stable in the USSR while the real incomes of the population keep on increasing.

It is no secret to anyone, except perhaps Mr Waugh, that health services are free in the Soviet Union and are open to any person, irrespective of social status.

Finally, Mr Waugh writes about what he calls the 'abominable housing' of Soviet workers. This is in spite of the fact that the Soviet Union is carrying out a truly gigantic housing programme. In the period of the ninth Five-Year Plan (1971-75) 56,500,000 people have moved to new or better housing. In 1975 alone a total of 109,300,000 square metres of living floor were built in this country. In 1976 the Soviet Union will build another 111,000,000 sq.m. of housing, 76,600,000 sq.m. of which will be built on the state budgetary allocations. This will provide another 11,000,000 people with better housing.

It is hardly possible to call objective the way Mr Waugh comes to deliberate on the achievements of socialism. Quite to the contrary, mildly speaking, the 'lowered' data he cites absolutely misinform your readers about the real conditions of Soviet workers. They demonstrate either the author's ignorance or his deliberate intention to distort the true state of affairs.

ANDREI DUBROVSKY
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The State of Spain

Sir, The significance to Spaniards of a general amnesty is even greater than emerges from Christopher Hitchens's masterly article on Spain (NS 9 January) and I hope these points may help your readers' grasp of a very complex, potentially fluid situation.

1. Franco's Last Decree: Annulment of the Anti-Terrorism Law of August last is inextricably linked with an amnesty because it was the basis of an exclusion clause (Article 3) in the King's Pardon. Thus even the limited benefit (only a fifth reduction in the case of 20-year sentences) is denied to members of parties never since the Civil War guilty of violence. While it remains in force thousands of trade unionists, communists, anarchists and regionalists would be exposed to re-arrest.

2. Franco's First Decree was, I believe, an *indulto* pardoning all violent crimes committed *against the Republic.* Now that his regime is ending (?) and the violence comes almost exclusively from the Right wing, police etc., Spaniards look for a corresponding gesture and, not unreasonably, that the law is turned equally on all terrorists and torturers.

The case of Francisco Tellez, tortured by the Civil Guard (not the police, incidentally) in Barcelona may therefore be more sinister than Mr Hitchens realises. Sr Tellez is a socialist member of the Workers' Commissions and it was unusual even before Franco's death for such vicious torture (beatings all over the body, toenails torn out) to be suffered by non-violent detainees not accused of terrorism. The only charge laid was illicit association, a public order not a court-martial offence. He was released on bail presumably because they do not have kidney dialysis machines in Civil Guard barracks, and is unlikely to leave hospital before February.

In fairness, Interior Minister Sr Fraga has agreed to examine the case and it has been reported in the press. It deserves close international attention, as well as sympathy, for it may prove to be yet another crucial test of the present Government's intentions towards human rights in Spain.

ALAN GROUNDS
Spain Co-ordinator
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Concorde and the Bishop

Sir, I am sad that even your venerable organ of free thought has, through Crucifer (London Diary 9 January), made its ritual prostration before the shrine of Concorde, surely the most vicious and devouring deity since Moloch. Why on earth is it any less acceptable to react emotionally to the indignity of Concorde than it is for any radical to attack any social evil with more than the weapons of sweet reason? And let it be said that Bishop Montefiore's record, as befits one in the tradition of the prophets, is consistently radical as it is well-informed.

Why is the Left so coy about environmental issues anyway? Is it because it has been persuaded by the media to believe that the environmental issue is 'middle class'? Or is it because historical determinism, coupled with the adulation of industrialism, is part of the inheritance from Marx and his more uncritical readers? This point is made with admirable clarity by E. F. Schumacher in his essay, *Socialism,* where he writes:

> Socialism is of interest solely for its non-economic values and the possibility it creates for the overcoming of the religion of economics. A society ruled primarily by the idolatry of *enrichissez-vous* which celebrates millionaires as its culture heroes, can gain nothing from socialisation that could not also be gained without it.

In the meantime, as one Labour Party activist who is also a conservationist once told me: 'Put down a motion on the environment before a Labour Party conference and that's the time when nine-tenths of the delegates decide they'd fancy a beer!'

IAN HENDERSON
Bishop of Willesden's Chaplain for Social Responsibility
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Nationalising a Bank or Two

Sir, Roger Opie's article in your issue of 9 January may be just in pointing out the familiar fact that industry gets less capital than it would like from the City, but his suggestion that the nationalisation of the banks would lead to a change in this situation flies in the face of experience. There is little evidence to suggest that civil servants are more entrepreneurial than bank managers and there have been enough examples in recent years of mismanagement in the public sector to suggest that their skills at backing winners will be no greater.

The lack of investment in industry has less to do with the 'failure of the City' than with government policies which positively discourage investors from supporting long-term industrial expansion. It is misguided to argue that what is needed is to give much more control over investment decisions to the politicians whose policies have created the situation. To argue however that nationalisation could be made effective if the expertise of a merchant bank were acquired compulsorily by a government is to imply that the City's bankers are less daft than the people whom Mr Opie proposes to put in their place.

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Counter-Insurgency in Oman

Sir, I would not expect to share many opinions with Mr Halliday but his article 'Imperialism's Last Stand?' (NS 2 January) contains so many errors of fact that they cannot be left unchallenged.

Mr Halliday took as his theme Oman's advertisements for pilots and suggested that this was proof that the Dhofar war was far from won. The pilots are needed for the Sultan's Air Force whether there is a war or not. Some are for air defence fighters but most are for the passenger and freight fixed-wing and rotary aircraft engaged *inter alia,* in delivering supplies, water and medical services to the people in the remote areas of a country in which land communications are often slow and punishing to vehicles, if they exist at all. Pilots will continue to be needed until there

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are enough Omanis trained to fly their own aircraft.

The statement that several thousand Iranians are operating in the war zone is untrue. There are fewer than 3,000 in the country and there is no 'war zone'. The whole of Dhofar is now a 'restricted fire' zone, that is to say that there is no air attack, no shelling, no fire of any kind unless at positively identified, weapon-carrying enemy. It is true that aircraft were used during the campaign to interdict enemy supply routes and camel trains bringing Russian-supplied arms and ammunition from neighbouring PDRY to the communist would-be 'liberators' in Dhofar. The remark that these guerrillas are now 'concentrated in the western part of Dhofar' is rubbish. Since operations were concluded in early December there have been no guerrillas in West Dhofar A few remain in the east and centre but they are cut off from their support and supplies and are mainly concerned with survival. Since October nearly 300 have left the 'People's Liberation Army' and professed loyalty to the Sultan and his Government. Almost all of them express total disillusionment with the Front.

Mr Halliday refers to the low wages of 'those Omanis lucky enough to find work'. He quotes less than £2 per day. The fact is that there is no unemployment in Oman and the average wage for an unskilled labourer is £140 per month, which is as good as or better than can be found for thousands of miles around.

How can Mr Halliday suggest that journalists are not allowed into the country because there is no wish for 'troublesome observers'? Almost unprecendented facilities, including total freedom of movement and inquiry, have been extended to journalists from all over the world. I myself have talked to representatives of countless Middle Eastern, American and European newspapers and other publications. From Britain alone these have included correspondents from all but two of the major newspapers and also from BBC and ITN. Their only view of the 'war' recently has been the shelling of an Omani border position by guns in PDRY, which has been one-way traffic since 22 November 1975 when Oman fired its last round in retaliation.

The article includes some of the cliché-ridden jargon used by those who are ignorant of the SAS and its role here. The expression 'behind the lines' is meaningless. There are no lines. The SAS has helped to train local forces to assume responsibility for the security of their own country and has also played an important part in bringing civil aid and medical facilities to the country people. The local forces they have trained are indeed 'counter-gangs' if that means that they are mostly formed from men who have seen the pointlessness of the destructive 'revolution' and recognised it as the only hindrance to the development programme inaugurated by the Sultan immediately on his accession. Nearly 1,500 of them have now surrendered and joined the government side. They are not engaged, as Mr Halliday suggests, in 'protection rackets', unless it be to protect their land and their families, and there is no 'anarchy'.

Food control has not been a policy of the campaign and there has been no resettlement of people into government centres. Sir William Halcrow and Company are consultants not builders and, far from the nine centres alleged, none has yet been completed. When the planned centres are built they will have no element of compulsory residence and will merely be administrative centres including shops, clinics, schools and mosques.

There are not 'over 2,000' British military personnel in Oman. The official figures are accurate. Those who are here are justly proud of any assistance they may have given to Oman in ridding its country of communist aggression and bringing peace and development to its people. They are mostly ordinary people of sound integrity who would not be here if they did not feel that what they were doing was morally right.

I suggest that you should rely on first-hand accounts of situations abroad and take with a large pinch of salt heavily-biased and ill-informed articles such as that presented by Mr Halliday, who has not visited Oman for some years and then saw only the PFLO side.

J. B. AKEHURST
Brigadier

Headquarters Dhofar Brigade
Salalah
BFPO 66

Papal Subversion

Sir, I wonder if you or any of your readers can help me with an obscure point concerning the recent papal pronouncements on sex. According to the reports the Pope recognises sex as a legitimate expression of love in marriage. What I need to know, as I am concerned in this subject, is how and when this subversive doctrine was introduced into papal thought. As far as my information goes sex is regarded as undesirable in itself in the Sermon on the Mount – there is no exception in favour of the wife or husband. St Paul merely said it was better to marry than to burn, but placed marriage below celibacy and this was evidently precisely because of the sex involved. Also according to my information, the official teaching of the churches, until relatively recently, was that sex in marriage was valid only for procreation.

The doctrine that sex is a legitimate expression of love seems to be a novelty. What pope introduced it, and when?

EDWARD GILBERT

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Halt Sign

Sir, When will it all end? It's all very well complaining about 'situation' and 'hopefully' and 'at this moment in time' and 'at the end of the day', but won't someone please call a halt to 'grinding to a halt'? Even your own pages are seldom free from the infection. Now Caroline Seebohm (NS 16 January) tells us that in New York, building is 'grinding to a halt'. Does nothing ever stop, or come to a stop, or even just plain halt, any more?

ARTHUR SOUTTER

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Rousseau's Spell

Sir, You have been so very generous in the space you have allowed the reviewer of my book about Rousseau ('Report from the Brink' NS 16 January) that I am reluctant to ask for even a brief moment's hospitality in your columns. But as you clearly take an interest in him, you would perhaps allow me to draw your readers' attention to one remarkable fact revealed about this remarkable man by the reception of my book. It is that, nearly two centuries after his death, he still arouses such strong feelings of sympathy (mostly on the Left) and antipathy (mostly on the Right) that they seem to affect or even determine the evaluation of a writer foolhardy enough to join the fray. No better example than the sharply contrasting views of my stylistic merits or demerits. Where the NS finds my book 'clumsily written and crudely argued' the *Economist* finds it 'scintillating . . . brilliantly written and extraordinarily entertaining'. And the appraisal of the book's value as a study of the man and his work shows an even greater divergence, with your Alan Ryan denying it 'almost every virtue a book ought to possess . . . it hardly pretends even to be a serious study' and Lord Snow describing it in the *Financial Times* as 'an inquiry, written in a spirit of mildly sardonic detachment, as to why Jean Jacques has been canonised . . . extremely shrewd and also funny'.

J. H. HUIZINGA

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The Lion Comique

Sir, A century ago the music hall was dominated by a special breed of performer – the Lion Comique. George Leybourne, Macdermott, Vance and a score more sang the 'topical songs' that are now remembered by the attractive lithograph covers by Maguire and Concanen.

I have been invited by Chappells to write a book – *Lion Comique* – about the men who sang and wrote the songs, together with a detailed listing of their songs. Material and memorabilia, particularly concerning the 'off stage' lives of these stars, would be of great value to me. Any material used would be carefully copied, returned and fully acknowledged.

PETER HONRI

32 Complins
Holybourne
Alton, Hants.

Adolescent Misbehaviour

Sir, So Crucifer (London Diary 16 January) doesn't associate lack of discipline with adolescent misbehaviour?

Well, during my daily journeys in Southern Rail compartments which have ripped seat covers, broken luggage racks and scrawled-upon walls, I have been thinking that parents do not impress enough on their children that public property is to be respected, and have observed that there is a fall in the number of occasions on which parents accompany their offspring in public places in order to teach this lesson. Children are now more often out together in bravado groups than quietly with their parents.

J. H. EDWARDS

Sutton, Surrey

Doctor Johnson's Words

Sir, If your cartoonist Garland *must* quote Dr Samuel Johnson in his cartoon (NS 16 January) he should quote him correctly.

Johnson said, according to Boswell: 'Sir, the noblest prospect that a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England.' He did *not* say 'the high road that leads him to London', as Garland maintains.

EDGAR M. KINGSTON

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Arthur's Seat

Sir, So Auberon Waugh is stunned by Eric Hiscock's 'spite' (NS Letters 16 January) in comparing him unfavourably with Arthur Marshall. But what could be more spiteful than his own letter?

Oh for the days of Giant Evelyn whose outsize nastinesses were always aimed at deflating pomposity in others – never at inflating his own. Nor would he ever have tried to foul a nest he was leaving.

RACHEL NEILL-HALL

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BOOKS & ARTS

John Jones

Happy Pebble

Dostoevsky: Reminiscences by ANNA DOSTOEVSKY *Wildwood House* £8.95

In the last sentence of her *Reminiscences* Anna Dostoevsky writes that 'both of us lived the fourteen years of our married life in the greatest happiness possible for human beings on earth'.

Well! And again well! It all depends, as C. E. M. Joad used to say, what you mean by happiness.

Dostoevsky married his stenographer – not a regular shorthand secretary but a temp to out-temp all temps, a girl 25 years younger than himself who answered a call for help to meet an emergency acute and grotesque even by Dostoevsky standards. Desperate for money, he had signed a contract with a shyster publisher under which, if he failed to deliver the manuscript of a new novel by 1 November 1866, he would subject himself to a heavy financial penalty, and on 1 December, if the book was still unfinished, the rights in all his existing and *future* works would pass to the publisher. The date was 4 October when Anna rang the doorbell of his flat, and not a word had been written.

On 29 October, less than four weeks later, *The Gambler* was finished. Dostoevsky asked her to dinner at a Petersburg restaurant. She hesitated.

> 'And have you ever been to a restaurant?' he asked me.
>
> 'No, never.'
>
> 'But will you come? I want to drink to the health of my dear collaborator.'
>
> 'I answered that I would ask my mother's opinion; but privately I was resolved not to go: my shyness would make me look stiff.

Shy or not, Anna had discovered that the next day, 30 October, was Dostoevsky's birthday, and she changed her short cotton black frock for a long silk lilac one when she brought him her transcription of the previous day's dictation. He managed to get out that she looked taller and more graceful, whereupon she struck home with an invitation to an informal celebration at her place on 3 November. Practical girl – her mother was a Swede – she went out and bought the kind of pears he had commended to her while they were working together. And so she waited for him.

He arrived and said he needed a week's rest – and then would she help him with *Crime and Punishment*, which had been interrupted by *The Gambler* crisis? 'Gladly,' she replied, but she would have to ask her stenography teacher first. Next day, 4 November, she described the events of the past month to her married sister whose reaction was:

> It's no use, Netochka, you having such a crush on Dostoevsky. Your dreams can't ever come true, and thank goodness they can't if he's as ill as all that and weighed down with family and debts.

On 8 November he proposed to her.

Illness, family, debts. This summarises what has to be put into the balance against that huge happiness which Anna claimed for them both. She did not marry him blindfold. She knew about his epilepsy, and within weeks of marrying him heard 'that horrible inhuman scream, or more precisely that howl', and found herself on the floor trying to contain his convulsions with his head in her lap. What she could not know was that while the fits became milder and less frequent over the years his breathing would be increasingly affected by the disease which made him a semi-invalid and eventually killed him, emphysema. She not only coped valiantly but gained in wifely forbearance since she accepted as the inevitable consequence of ill health the depression, moroseness, truculence, tetchy pride, and even the storms of jealousy which others attributed to a nasty nature.

Anna had also brushed against his family before marrying him. They were a scrounging, spiteful lot. Thereafter it was war. Paul the stepson, a vicious prankster, tried to discredit the housekeeping of the new wife by drinking the cream just before Dostoevsky came into the drawing room for his coffee. Then all the matches in the house would disappear – a shrewd ploy since his stepfather was a heavy and fretful smoker.

Anna fought back but realised there could be no final victory over the family unless she got her husband away from them. You can't move a step without money, Dmitri Karamazov remarks, and Anna had observed vases and spoons disappearing into pawn in the early days when Dostoevsky was dictating *The Gambler*. Now she pawned her own things and spent part of her dowry getting the pair of them out of Russia. (Biographers have laid too much stress on Dostoevsky's need to escape his creditors and not enough on Anna's determination to save her marriage.)

Once in Europe, vagrant through Germany, Switzerland, Italy, she discovered who the gambler really was. The story of Dostoevsky and roulette is well known. I only want to say that those terrible, abject scenes in shabby lodgings and hotel bedrooms were not the bottom of the pit; more than once she encouraged him to try his luck again – 'to distract him from his gloomy thoughts,' she tells us in that placid way of hers.

Earlier in her narrative, still placid and completely unaccusing, she writes: 'At that time he did not love me nearly as much as he did in later years.' Getting away from his family and having their own was, as her instinct told her, the heart of the matter. The birth of their first baby is described in detail:

> His face showed such torment, such desperation! At times I saw him sobbing, and I began to fear that I might be on the threshold of death . . . In the end the midwife forbade my husband to come into my room . . . Fyodor Mikhailovich told me afterwards that he was praying for me all the time, when suddenly in the midst of my groans he seemed to hear some strange cry like a child's. He could not believe his ears; but when the cry was repeated he realised that the child was born. Beside himself with joy, he jumped up from his knees, ran over to the door which was hooked shut, pushed it open with all his strength, and throwing himself on his knees beside my bed, began kissing my hands . . . The midwife told me that in all her many years of practice she had never seen a father so distraught.

This event reappears in *The Devils*, but instead of the Swiss woman we have Mrs Virginsky, the freethinking midwife of 'our town' who teases and taunts Shatov when he cries:

> Rejoice, Mrs Virginsky! It is a great joy! The coming of a new human being is a great and incomprehensible mystery, Mrs Virginsky, and what a pity it is that you don't understand it!

– Mrs Virginsky, 'whose atheistic sallies once so shocked a patient who was screaming in labour and calling on the name of the Almighty, that delivery was accelerated'.

Art – that vast world of Dostoevsky's creation which hovers between the surreal and the sublime – called for Mrs Virginsky, and it also required him to suppress a touching autobiographical detail. A month before their baby was due the Swiss midwife called on Anna and asked which of their friends lived in the same street as she did, because she was always meeting Dostoevsky near her house. Under questioning he confessed that he had been practising this route every day during the last three months of her pregnancy – 'all these streets look so much alike' – to be sure he could find the way in the dark or (as in fact happened) in the aftermath of an epileptic fit.

The place for that story was not *The Devils* but Anna's heart, drawing this couple inexorably together. There is no indication she could tell a book from a bluebottle, but neither did she sentimentalise her husband although, of course, he stands transfigured in her love: the giver of preposterous presents ('magnificent opera glasses in sky-blue enamel'), the pronouncer of naïve gallantries: 'To me you are a beauty. Yes, and to everybody!' He is the dreamer who discovered a practical talent in his fatherhood, washing, dressing, feeding children, teaching them their letters and prayers, decorating Christmas trees. He is the fated night worker, seeing her to bed at eleven and retiring himself between three and four.

Gradually her grip tightened on their domestic, social, financial affairs. She rented their flats and houses in her own name and even became his publisher, buying paper, hiring a printer, calculating profit margins. She tended to get things right. Her only bad mistake about Dostoevsky came

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from believing his constant complaint that he would be a better writer if only he had sound health and more leisure and money. This mistake is repeated by Helen Muchnic in her introduction to Beatrice Stillman's timely and proficient translation of the revised (1971) edition of Anna's *Vospominaniya*. To put the record straight one need only recall that *The Adolescent* (alias *A Raw Youth*), much of which was written in peaceful, almost idyllic circumstances, is by far the weakest of the late novels and perhaps a poorer book than *The Gambler*, which Dostoevsky and his shorthand temp knocked together in 25 days. 'My little diamond,' he called her when she said she would marry him.

'You've made a mistake, Fyodor Mikhailovich,' she replied. 'It's no diamond you have found but an ordinary pebble.'

Hard, enduring pebble. And yes – happy pebble.

Philip French

In Darkest Disneyland

Ragtime by E. L. DOCTOROW *Macmillan* £3.50

In his first novel, a terse allegorical Western called *Welcome to Hard Times*, E. L. Doctorow examined the dark side of the winning of the West. More recently in *The Book of Daniel* he explored the anxieties of post-war America through the memoir of a radical student of the Sixties whose communist parents (clearly based on the Rosenbergs) were executed for treason. With *Ragtime* he has turned his acerbic eye upon the years between, and specifically on the mythical Golden Age that many Americans persist in believing their country enjoyed from the closing of the frontier in the 1890s to the US entry into the Great War. In his opening paragraph he invokes this myth (the world of *The Music Man, Hello Dolly, Meet Me in St Louis*, Disneyland's Main Street) and brings it into question. In its place he constructs an extraordinary kaleidoscopic picture of an energetic, cruel, deeply divided society running dangerously out of control. His method resembles the enigmatic collages of R. B. Kitaj, or a documentary movie combining old newsreels, feature films and still photographs, or an adult, nightmare version of Disneyland. In a brilliant passage towards the end of *The Book of Daniel*, Doctorow meditates on Disneyland's corrupt blend of real, legendary and fictional characters, its calculated distortion of history, and so on, and he comments:

> Obviously there are political implications. What Disneyland proposes is a technique of abbreviated shorthand culture for the masses, a mindless thrill, like an electric shock, that insists at the same time on the recipient's rich psychic relation to his country's history and language and literature. In a forthcoming time of highly-governed masses in an overpopulated world, this technique may be extremely useful both as a substitute for education and, eventually, as a substitute for experience.

To compose his counter- or anti-Disneyland, Doctorow also takes real, legendary and fictional characters and traces their fortunes between 1905 and the Great War. The first of three sets of 'fictional' characters is an emblematic middle-class WASP family living outside New York, known simply as Mother, Father, Mother's Younger Brother, Little Boy and Grandfather. During Teddy Roosevelt's and Taft's Presidencies they derive their considerable income from the patriotism business, manufacturing flags, bunting and Fourth of July fireworks; one of their specially designed Old Glories is left at the Pole by Admiral Peary whose Arctic expedition Father joins, as previously he had participated in the conquest of the Philippines. (In Doctorow's scheme America's imperialist adventure in the Philippines of course anticipates Vietnam, just as Peary's journey to the North Pole parallels the assault upon the moon.) When we meet them they are as idyllically happy as a similar family in the same neighbourhood – the one celebrating 4 July 1906 in Eugene O'Neill's only comedy, *Ah! Wilderness*; at the end Doctorow has taken them – just as O'Neill took his family in his bleak re-working of the earlier play – on a long day's journey into night. 'I know these are the happy years,' Mother reflects. 'And ahead of us are only great disasters.'

At the bottom of the social pile Doctorow locates a second family headed by an Eastern European Jewish immigrant Tateh, whose horrendous experiences in the Lower East Side ghetto and the dark satanic mills of Massachusetts render him prematurely aged. A third ethnic strand is provided by the black unmarried mother Sara and her lover, the proud Harlem ragtime pianist Coalhouse Walker Jr, whose profession directs us towards the musical form or analogy of the book.

Over the years their lives (and those of various public figures) become intertwined in ingenious and complex ways, though never so that we fail to notice the dodge beneath the skein. Mother, for instance, eventually marries Tateh, who's abandoned his socialism and is on his way to becoming a Hollywood mogul and the creator of that melting-pot joke, *Our Gang*; Coalhouse Walker is driven into political terrorism when a party of white racists desecrate his cherished Model T Ford, after he's been visiting Sara at the WASP family home; Mother's Younger Brother makes bombs for Coalhouse and dies riding alongside Zapata

THE MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM HICKEY

EDITED BY PETER QUENNELL

'It is impossible to describe what they contain because they contain so much. It is impossible to reproduce their comedy because it runs continuously both along and between the lines. It is impossible, finally to say why and how Hickey did the job so superlatively well. All that can be said, in fact, is that the "Memoirs" are essential to a good education, but that it is essential to read them in order to know why.' – Nigel Dennis, *Sunday Telegraph*

'A joyful, only occasionally repentant and entirely predictable Rake's Progress, which we follow with almost as much enjoyment as the beneficiary himself, a lusty runner in that gruelling steeple-chase.' – Richard Cobb, *Guardian*

Illustrated £5.95

THE VALOIS TAPESTRIES

FRANCES A. YATES

Dr Yates gives a detailed historical elucidation of the meaning of the Valois Tapestries, the record of a lost moment in history. As Frank Kermode has written in the *New Statesman:* 'Who can now walk past these tapestries in the Uffizi without reflecting that they are not merely delectable extravagances but documents subtly woven into the fabric of cultural and political history?'

Reissued with new preface 120 half-tones £8.75

Routledge & Kegan Paul

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in Mexico; Father becomes an armaments tycoon and is blown up by his own explosives (designed by Younger Brother) when the *Lusitania* goes down in 1915.

Injected into these exemplary lives, as I've said, are numerous numinous public personalities – most notably the world's richest man, J. P. Morgan; Henry Ford; the anarchist Emma Goldman; the ex-chorus girl Evelyn Nesbit and her millionaire husband Harry Thaw who in 1906 murdered the celebrated architect Stanford White; and the escapologist Harry Houdini. There are also brief walking-on parts for Sigmund Freud (going through the Tunnel of Love at Coney Island with Jung during their famous American visit of 1909), Booker T. Washington, Von Papen, *et al*, of a kind that recalls the famous stage direction in Beerbohm's *'Savonarola' Brown*: 'Enter Boccaccio, Benvenuto Cellini and many others making remarks highly characteristic of themselves.' Towards the end Doctorow tosses two more harbingers of an uncertain future – Picasso and Einstein – into the brew.

Several of these encounters are brilliant set-pieces, such as the imaginary conversation in which Morgan attempts to convince Henry Ford that they are reincarnations of the Pharaohs, charged with special responsibilities as social guardians. Or the hilarious yet characteristically didactic episode in which Evelyn Nesbit is stripped of her restrictive underwear by Emma Goldman to the accompaniment of a 'politicising' lecture about the subjugation of women, while Mother's Younger Brother masturbates in a cupboard. The interweaving of 'real' and 'fictitious' characters reaches its elaborately contrived symbolic climax when Coalhouse Walker and his urban guerrillas occupy Morgan's library (designed by Stanford White) and threaten to destroy its unique, irreplaceable contents unless the authorities restore the pianist's Ford car, that ultimate in mass-produced, replaceable objects.

There is in *Ragtime* a romantic attachment to radical politics and revolutionary socialism, and characters are judged by the extent to which they reject or embrace the ethos of the times. Houdini, we're told, 'never developed what we would think of as a political consciousness. He could not reason from his own hurt feelings'. The arch capitalist Morgan gets by because of his utter disgust with modern civilisation. Opposed to this endorsement of political commitment is the seductive power of mysticism which consoles Morgan and distracts Houdini. A strongly mystical vein of course informs the pattern making of the book itself. No doubt we are expected to accept this as a metaphor for social experience, but an ambiguity remains and it is expressed in the character of the Little Boy, who from time to time is the novel's narrator. In 1905 he asks Houdini to 'Warn the Duke', a precognition of Sarajevo that the escapologist fails to pass on when he meets the Archduke Ferdinand, and recalls it only in 1914 while hanging upside down from a skyscraper over Broadway. How did Little Boy manage this? Perhaps because he understands the techniques used by Doctorow himself in *Ragtime*. The Boy we're told, 'was alert not only to discarded materials but to unexpected events and coincidences'; he has absorbed Ovid through Grandfather's fireside tales,

> discovering that the forms of life were volatile and that everything in the world could as easily be something else . . . He accepted stories as images of truth, and therefore as propositions that could be tested. He found proof in his own experience of the instability of things and people.

Ragtime is a knowing, self-conscious work, written in a translucent, deceptively simple style. It's imaginative, fiercely intelligent, funny and, despite the careful distancing of the characters, oddly moving. It is also at times arch and portentous. The kind of literary activity that Doctorow is engaged in here is rather fashionable at the moment. Tom Stoppard's *Travesties* and Graham Greene's *The Return of A. J. Raffles* employ similar strategies, and in America *Ragtime* followed Nicholas Meyer's Freud-Holmes novel, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, at the top of the best-seller list. All four are set in roughly the same period, an era that produced that social, political and cultural transformation with which we are still grappling, and they all treat it in a playful, elegiac manner. Such works appeal to an age that has lost faith in the objective value of history and become uncomfortable in the presence of traditional high art. But I think that Doctorow is at heart much more serious and his achievement more substantial. It is perhaps with Borges and Thomas Pynchon that he should be compared.

Margaret Drabble

Age of Reason

One Woman's Story by ANNE TIBBLE *Peter Owen* £3.95

Anne Tibble, in her autobiographical *One Woman's Story*, reveals herself as an old-fashioned progressive: one of those who believe that the world can be improved and people enlightened, who believe that foreigners are not necessarily funny or primitive people necessarily wise, that a rational education makes people rational, that trust is more often justified than suspicion. She seems to think that things are getting better, not worse. In 1975, many of her views ring very strangely, and one wonders what those unfamiliar with her kind of background would make of them. Her remarks are an odd mixture of the wise, the naïve and the slightly shocking. In part, her story is conventional enough: a country girl from Cleveland, whose father worked on the estate of the traveller and eccentric, Gertrude Bell, she was educated at the local co-educational Grammar School: she went from there to what she describes as 'Northern Redbrick', where she was lectured to by Tolkien and Abercrombie, moved by Blake and Clare and Coleridge and Hopkins, bored by Pope and Crabbe, and disturbed by T. S. Eliot's insistence on showing people as 'ugly, stupid, shabby, vulgarian, squalid, somehow indecent'. Her attack on Eliot is very much an attack of her class; she says:

> People such as those in *The Waste Land* I had been looking at all my life; the 'broken fingernails of dirty hands' was meant to repel, to startle readers into seeing working people as rats – slimy, mean, ugly . . . Weren't these my father's and mother's hands? Hands therefore of so many like them.

There is nothing surprising about this except its forthrightness: it is a straightforward progressive attack on what James Simmons (whom she quotes) describes as 'this famous work's obscure pornography' – the pornography of élitist neurosis, élitist distaste.

True to her principles, Anne Tibble refused to allow herself to be repelled when she moved from Redbrick to teach a class of 57 seven-year-old girls in Fish-Dock Street in a Northern sea port. Despite smells of fish-glue and tanning, despite lice in the classroom, she forced herself to see the town and the school through the eyes of her landlady, who saw nothing in the squalor but 'a fine, stirring bustle'. But she is really more at home in the country: she describes long walks in Wharfedale in the Cleveland hills, and is clearly happiest in her adult life when living in or close to nature. Her first home of her own was in a village near Peterborough, where she started her marriage with her husband, whom she refers to as J. He was a teacher and educationalist, who shared her passion for the poetry of Clare: they spent most of their holidays, during those first five years, copying his manuscripts on the dark stairs of the Peterborough Museum. Together they wrote a *Life* (published in 1932), and have helped various of his poems to publication: though there remains much of Clare's now popular work, surprisingly, still in manuscript.

When she married, she stopped teaching. She continued to write, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully, and produced two children, but her career was always subservient to her husband's, a fact that she does not seem to have questioned; or not, at least, until she was forced to do so. Undeniably a modern woman, free-thinking, independent, unafraid of sex, she read Marie Stopes and *Lady Chatterley* in a smuggled version, and says that country people do not much prize virginity: and, she says, 'I never had much of what's called shame.' She enjoyed her children, and writes touchingly of the pleasure of breast-feeding her first baby, Jane: 'At my breast the head bobs up and down, with the absorption of a squirrel eating nuts, a bee in a snapdragon, a robin with a morsel.' Yet she is haunted by that fear of the Thirties: 'You must not make the emotional bonds too strong between yourself and the child.' 'You must not pick the infant up.' And she accepted her role as stay-at-home mother, recognising that her husband had progressed beyond her intellectually, despite the similarity of their interests. It is hard to imagine any woman leading such a life today, a life where progressive ideas and traditional behaviour could be so oddly mixed: it is an account of a period in which

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women gained more in theory than they took hold of in fact, and Anne Tibble's slightly malicious comments about professional university wives show that the role of wife did not seem to her wholly satisfying.

The most curious episode in the whole book is an account of a relationship which her husband had with an American woman. After the war, he went off for a year to lecture in an American university, leaving his wife and children behind; he returned with the woman, whom he loved, and whom he expected his wife to accept, to accommodate, to like. This is progressive indeed, by any standards, and it forces his wife into a period of painful and shocking reappraisal: of love, of monogamy, of contraception, of marriage, of her own achievements as woman, cook, housewife, lover. Her honesty is distressing. As a reader, one wonders: is this the inevitable messy conclusion of so much common sense, of so much enlightenment, of the long talks and long walks and the plain registry office marriage and the shared books? Unreason raises its ugly head, and unreason masquerading as reason, as it does here, is a terrifying sight.

The crisis was weathered: the marriage survived, the children grew up and married, Anne's parents died, nearly ninety, in the old cottage of her childhood: their dead faces, she said, in one of her striking phrases, had 'the texture of fine sand or clear wax'. And, at the end, her husband also died, leaving her to write this memorial, and comforted, reasonable to the last, by believing that 'there is no eternity of individual self-consciousness to face'.

Elizabeth Longford

Holy Padlock

Samuel Johnson and his World by MARGARET LANE *Hamish Hamilton* £6.95

It is only natural that our best biographers should want to try their hand at our greatest geniuses. The accomplished Margaret Lane has been actively brooding over Doctor Johnson for more than a decade. Nine years ago she included in a volume called *Purely for Pleasure* three essays on the great man – at home, at table, and with women. She modestly described them as 'extended footnotes' to other people's biographies. Now they have been absorbed into her own full-scale, illustrated biography, and very satisfying it is.

The most seductive section deals with the *amitié amoureuse* of Johnson and Hester Lynch Thrale, later Mrs Piozzi. He was 56 when he met this remarkable wife of a wealthy Southwark brewer, and she 23. The immense age-gap was comparable with that between himself and his late wife 'Tetty', though it was Tetty who, at their marriage, was nearly double her partner's age. Like the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Doctor Johnson seems to have needed a generation gap

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one way or the other, for happiness with the opposite sex.

Margaret Lane has defined *amitié amoureuse* elsewhere as 'tasting the marzipan and leaving the plum-cake alone'. In his case, Johnson bit off more than the marzipan but less than the plum-cake. His hard and painful extra mouthful was more like a piece of the plate; an agonising experience which he forced Mrs Thrale to partake of as well. This aspect of their friendship came to light only in 1932, when a study of *Thraliana* revealed Mrs Thrale as performing a secret service for the sage. At his request, when he was afflicted with hallucinations of sin and madness, she would padlock him into his room in her Streatham country home and keep him there until abstinence and prayer had exorcised the 'black dog'. Her plea that he should not 'quarrel with your governess for not using the rod enough' might suggest that she was also required to flagellate him, and I suspect that if he had not formed his tie with a woman as sensible and obstinately cheerful as Hester Thrale, he might well have added the whips of fact to the scorpions of his imagination.

Then came the débâcle in their relations, with the suddenly widowed Mrs Thrale's bombshell of a marriage to Gabriel Piozzi the Italian singer. Johnson's emotional outburst cannot be condoned, only pitied. If further evidence were needed that his padlock was partly erotic (and not unconnected with wedlock?) his violent and inexcusable reaction to the Piozzi marriage provides it. On the other hand, Mrs Thrale's failure to warn him that she was falling in love with Piozzi was equally inexcusable.

The Johnson-Thrale affair occupies the last 100 pages of this economical yet evocative biography. Meanwhile Margaret Lane has built up a masterly and colourful portrait within the framework of Johnson's 'world': his indolence and ambition, his stoicism and curiosity, his rationality and emotionalism. Three Doctor Johnsons are seen to be dwelling in brittle amity behind the façade of the house in Gough Square, which people can still see as they hurry into London Broadcasting near by. First, the dictatorial 'Great Cham' of the Club and taverns; second, the playful companion whose laughter and buffoonery was irresistible; third, the haunted melancholic of the diaries and prayers. Johnson once said that 'a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity'. Against the tavern chair had to be set the Throne of Grace, which in fact was the centre of Johnson's life. But his belief in a Calvinistic, vengeful deity caused his religion to undermine while it supported him.

Out of this conflict grew the life-long delusion (sprouting at 19) that he was or soon would be mad. The conflict can be symbolised by the 'black dog' inside himself *versus* the 'young dogs' like James Boswell who drew him out into the sunlight of human companionship. It was only on his deathbed, when his doctor apprised him of his imminent dissolution, that his Christianity became serene. To adapt his own oft-quoted words, spoken seriously by him rather than jestingly, as Margaret Lane points out, 'Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to die in a few days, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.'

Brigid Brophy

Peace & Concorde

Concorde by JOHN COSTELLO and TERRY HUGHES *Angus & Robertson* £3.80

Capitalism customarily sells its goods by telling white lies in the advertising columns. But when a national group of capitalists has a monopoly to protect, it resorts to black lies in the fact and opinion columns.

The near-monopoly the US exercises over building airliners for the non-communist world dates back to the division of wartime labour whereby Britain concentrated on fighting planes and left transports to the United States. To each other the US manufacturers are only fake rivals. All depend on one source of capital, which is public, not private, and they need not fear that one will scoop the pool since the pool is administered in the light of a doctrinaire political belief in 'competition'. Federal dollars pay the huge cost of developing military planes, which are then rejigged into such civil versions as the Boeing 707 and the Jumbo 747. There have been chinks before now in the US monopoly (the first scheduled jet service was flown by a British line in a British plane) but at present if you fly by our national airline on any of the major profitable routes you will fly in a plane made in the United States and bought to the detriment of Britain's balance of payments – unless, of course, the route you are flying is London to Bahrain.

The defence of the US manufacturers against Concorde is conducted by the well-meaning non-thinking. It employs *suppressio veri* (hands up the casual newspaper reader who knows that in its production model Concorde is one of the most smoke-free aircraft flying) and *suggestio fantasiae*. The most recent chorus was justly led by a bishop: from its start Christianity has held that the end of the world, in conditions of sci-fi horror, was the punishment man must hourly expect for eating of the tree of knowledge (i.e., improving his technology). Concorde has been slandered as an imminent ender of the world both by freezing the earth and by warming it up and thus melting the polar ice cap, not to mention by genetic damage. (In a delicate commercial attack on Concorde's ability to supply businessmen travellers with their expected perks, it was rumoured that all the stewardesses would have to be beyond child-bearing age.) After the New York hearings, the scales, as *The Times* put it in a bizarre metaphor, are 'evenly tipped' on whether Concorde will be allowed to compete on the North Atlantic routes or whether the lumbering US planes will be protected under the pretence of saving their virgin environment. In fact, if Concorde were capable of causing the environmental damage attributed to it, the damage would have been done already – by the bombers of Concorde size and speed that the US has already launched into the North American air.

The booklet by F. G. Clark and Arthur Gibson is still the most comprehensible account for laymen of Concorde's aeronautical brilliance and the engineering feats of its construction, which included submitting an entire airframe to alternate boiling and freezing. The Costello-Hughes book is more concerned with the trials the builders suffered through the blowing hot and cold of governments and airlines. A book that tells you that de Gaulle called Concorde *'le machine'* casts doubt on its own reliability, but if even half its statements are true the technological marvel was accomplished despite an administrative background of bad faith, unenlightened self-interest and incompetence.

The authors reproduce the Anglo-French treaty that begat Concorde and a summary of the Department of Transportation report that cleared supersonic flight of the worst environmentalist slanders. Otherwise, their chief documentation seems to be press cuttings, which happily include cartoons. They open with Calman's drawing of a Concorde with a droop snoot at each end, beside which a British and a French planemaker both say, 'I thought you were making the tail'. Perhaps a similar mal-coordination between the authors has produced such out-of-joint phrases an 'in the matter of financial matters' and the indecision the text shows about whether its subject is 'Concorde' or 'the Concorde'. However, until the story is told by the Websterian genius it needs, this journalistic account (which, ironically, is written and spelt in North American) is to be recommended – especially to any friends of the earth or the ozone who are also friends of civilisation. For the new year, friends: love, peace and Concorde.

Frank Hardie

Beleaguered

British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935-6 by DANIEL WALEY *Temple Smith* £6.00

It was 'the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality': Macaulay 'knew no spectacle so ridiculous', but on this particular occasion it proved well-grounded and extremely effective. On 11 September 1935 Sir Samuel Hoare, Foreign Secretary, told the Assembly of the League of Nations that the British Government stood for 'steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression'. One such occurred on 3 October when Italy invaded Ethiopia. On the 23rd the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, announced a general election to be held on 14 November, which he won.

His principal election pledge was that 'the League of Nations will remain the keystone of British foreign policy . . . ' The new Parliament met on 3 December, on the 8th Hoare initialled the Hoare-Laval Plan for the dismemberment of Ethiopia; on the

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10th news of it appeared in the British press; eight days later public outcry had killed the plan and sacked Sir Samuel. The political seismometers of the time correctly recorded the extent of the shock. It was a major earthquake, still of interest 40 years later. Can a powerful minister in a democratic country still be overthrown by mere public opinion and, if so, how?

It is the question of the 'how' in 1935 to which Dr Waley primarily addresses his attention. The hypothesis hitherto has been that MPs were so deluged by letters of protest against the Hoare-Laval deal that they in their turn put pressure on ministers and they finally forced their colleague's resignation. But Dr Waley has found that MPs greatly exaggerated the numbers of these letters. He puts the important point neatly:

> *Vox populi* spoke in unison with the politicians, but it was not the essential effective prime mover. When it spoke again, against the ending of sanctions six months later, it spoke alone and without effect.

But now we must step back to consider Dr Waley's second major contribution based on hitherto unused sources. He has made the first serious study of the workings of that immensely powerful 'pressure group', the League of Nations Union, at the peak of its power, at branch as well as 'headquarters' level. And what emerges?

> What was important was the Union's success in persuasion on a large scale, and in organising the expression of sympathetic opinion. These successes were responsible for Baldwin's and Hoare's almost inadvertent verbal adherence to the League's ideals and the explosion which occurred when the old face of diplomacy was revealed behind the mask of idealism.

In other words, the net result of the Union's crusade was to change the pronouncements of politicians rather than their policies.

This, Dr Waley would agree, is to be unfair to the part played by the newly elected MPs, especially the 'National' ones, who had taken the pronouncements seriously. Fifty-nine Government supporters in the House of Commons signed a critical motion. Moreover, the government back-benchers' 'Foreign Affairs Committee' (the two groups overlapped) rose in revolt. Its chairman was Sir Austen Chamberlain and if any one man at that moment had the chance to turn out, not just the Foreign Secretary, but the Prime Minister as well, Chamberlain was the man. However, as we know, Sir Austen always played the game, and always lost, and he did so on this occasion, his third and last chance of the premiership for himself. Two years later he died. The book's evidence, by the way, for a Cabinet split in December 1935 seems slim.

The world of public opinion in 1935-36 explored by Dr Waley has acquired elements of antiquarian charm. There was, of course, no television; and opinion polls, as we now know them, started only in 1938. There were newsreels at cinemas during the showing of which strong emotion was occasionally expressed by clapping or hissing (claps always win against hisses); the LNU made a film which the censor, Lord Tyrrell (a critic of the Union), in part censored, subsequently describing 'the creeping of politics into films' as dangerous; and Baldwin suspected, possibly rightly, that non-London MPs tested the mood of constituents by talking to station masters at the weekends.

Among this week's contributors:

JOHN JONES is the author of *The Egotistical Sublime, On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* and *John Keats' Dream of Truth.*

MARGARET DRABBLE's most recent novel is *Realms of Gold*; her biography of Arnold Bennett appeared in 1974.

FRANK HARDIE is the author of *The Abyssinian Crisis* (1974).

John Fuller

Fair Play

Library Looking Glass by DAVID CECIL *Constable* £5.50

David Cecil's new book is subtitled 'A Personal Anthology' and may be confidently recommended for its worthy and engaging morsels of Hardy, Pope, Hazlitt, Ruth Pitter, Wordsworth, Beerbohm and others. There is possibly too much that is fairly familiar, but no such salmagundy for bed or loo can survive wholly on the exotic. At least there are few duds, and the gathered authors really do look at ease as the guests or naturalised citizens of Lord David's sensibility. But I suppose the point is finally a rather different one. Like Auden's *A Certain World, Library Looking Glass* is a selection from the author's commonplace book with an accompanying commentary, and just as Auden acknowledged that his was 'a sort of autobiography', so Lord David admits his to be 'a sort of self-portrait'. Both, too, are arranged alphabetically, a procedure which actually somewhat militates against portraiture. It's certainly one which looks less suited to Lord David's civilised literary judgments than it did to the more wide-ranging quirks and observations of Auden's mind. I imagine we are struck most by such miscellaneous fare when it falls to us as crumbs from the table of great magpie minds like Auden or Coleridge. Their knowledge and discoveries illuminate their own work in a complex way, whereas Lord David's book is primarily an occasion for criticism or for the more incidental revelation of taste or wisdom in annotating a lifetime's happy forays of reading.

Lord David's great gift as a teacher and as a critic is for combining enthusiasm with lucidity. He is not often concerned with verbal subtleties or with the intellectual background of a writer, but his gift nonetheless enables him to pinpoint a writer's uniqueness and to commend this uniqueness to us with a persuasive charm. He likes to discover the point at which we can say that *this* is what makes a writer of value to us, *this* is the central contribution, *this* above all has advanced our moral awareness. Such a gift might appear to be commonplace, the prerequisite of any critic, but this is not so. It is pitifully rare. And a book of this kind, of course, shows it off to advantage.

Lord David is sometimes made out to be a kind of aesthetic hedonist, as though this were a matter for rebuke, but *Library Looking-Glass* reminds us that there is a dignity and responsibility in pleasure. For Lord David, literature is always at the service of life: it is bound to enlarge our sense of life's values and possibilities through its creative contemplation of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. To do this, the writer must play fair. He must play the hand he has been dealt, and not the hand he thinks he should have been dealt. Only in this way will he be able to discover his own unique potential. Thus Lord David praises the appropriate, the elegant, the modest and the formal perhaps rather more than he praises the romantic or sublime. Indeed, his own annotations frequently take philosophical wing and evoke some aphorist of the Enlightenment. An interesting discussion, for instance, about dramatic eloquence and dramatic realism following two extracts from Congreve and Synge culminates in the dictum: 'It is a sad and bewildering truth that literary style has got worse since everyone learned to read.' The point has been argued, but it still has an air of challenge.

Elsewhere the challenge is issued to the quality of modern life (spoliation of country landscape, pettiness of Oxford philosophy) and the reader may choose where to disagree. Even if he finds himself disagreeing a good deal, he will be bound to acknowledge the force of Lord David's statements, as when for instance, following a discussion of Yeats and of the frequently unscrupulous character of the men who built the great English country houses, he says:

> Beauty is created by those who believe both in the body and the soul and delight in both. The present age believes in the body but does not delight in it; and it is not sure whether it believes in the soul at all.

For myself, I value most the purely literary judgments in this book. A good example is his requirement of simplicity in the expression of the heroic, leading him to: 'It is from Feeble, not from King Henry V, that we hear the true accents of a hero.' Indeed, simplicity is a great virtue, if an audacious one. Lord David risks many apparently simple literary truths (about the nature of tragic conflict, about epithets, about married love poetry, about the beginnings and endings of poems, etc. etc.) and in most of them he does indeed contrive to add a plentiful dash of those necessary condiments to the simple: surprise and memorability. Perhaps, then, the book is rather less a looking-glass than a showcase which brilliantly illuminates its specimens.

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Susannah Clapp

Virgin Soil

Gentle Folk by ALEXANDER BARON *Macmillan* £3.95
Nightshade by DEREK MARLOWE *Weidenfeld* £3.75
Duo and **Le Toutounier** by COLETTE *translated by Margaret Crosland Peter Owen* £3.75 each
The Glass Zoo by JAMES MCNEISH *Hodder & Stoughton* £4.25
When the Boat Comes In by JAMES MITCHELL *Hamish Hamilton* and *Sphere* £3.50 and 60p

Blurting and blushing are no longer thought to be the inevitable afflictions of young men: 20-year-old heroes today – in novels at any rate – like to do their suffering more intricately, with the aid of the great face-saver, self-deprecation. Alexander Baron's latest novel is set in 1911, before earnestness went out of fashion, and has as one of its accomplishments an unmocking awareness of such changes in emotional style.

Richard Latt, the bashful hero of *Gentle Folk*, goes to Fabian meetings, likes to 'walk in the Park and all that', and in company lurches from silence punctuated by 'a brief idiot laugh' to eager discussion of 'topics' – the Science Museum or Roger Fry's aesthetics. The company which buzzes around him in the course of this novel – neatly limited to a country-house weekend – ranges from the uncorseted but passionless Portia, whose one 'imperious longing' is to be up-to-date, to F. J. Dobbs, author of books about science and liberated women, and adopted by the Fabian gentlefolk as centrepiece of the weekend. F.J.'s squeaky voice, apprenticeship in gas-lit shops and much-debated sexual adventures are clearly intended to conjure up the figure of Wells, and in this Alexander Baron succeeds almost too well: with Wells firmly and petulantly present, and hints in other characters of MacDonald and the Webbs, *Gentle Folk* runs the risk of dwindling into a political conundrum.

It is more than this, partly because of the unobtrusive precision of period detail – the 'remorseless melioration' of the working classes is discussed to a background of kippers under domed servers – and partly because of the distracting alternative offered by Richard Latt. For, when he's not aching after Portia, Richard sees pictures: of men on barbed wire, of a concrete London – scenes which begin to come true, and which F.J. then snaffles for novel-copy. Though Richard's final vision – of his own death – strays into sentimental predictability, Alexander Baron mostly handles these scenes well: they are startling, plain, relevant to the rest of the action and psychologically credible – the mental blurts of a shy young man only half in time with his age.

The blushes which constantly fill the face of Derek Marlowe's small sad hero are those of a 35-year-old man who never has sex with his wife. Edward Lytton believes in blazers and flannels, the discipline of the body and lack of ostentation; Amy, the object of her husband's 'canine devotion' is secretly sexy and likes to play games. Seeking escape from sinisterness at home – where Amy's sister has recently hanged herself – the chaste and chummy couple unwisely choose a Caribbean holiday. But in Haiti disembodied voices whisper in corridors, cars and planes crash too often, Amy turns vulgar and unpredictable – and the Lyttons end up crushed by houngans, voodoo, ghosts and goddesses of fertility.

Elaborate attempts are made to persuade readers of the intricacy of events and moods. Schoolmasterly asides invite collaboration and draw attention to the narrator, battling behind the action like another spectre: Edward, on page 110, claims to feel 'as if I was reading a book about someone called Edward Lytton . . . I'm on page 110 and thinking . . .' Such interjections, which carry some suggestion of self-justification – pre-empting criticism from spook sceptics – convolute rather than point to complexities. It is not, after all, the first time that spooks and sex have been linked. The best touches in this novel are the simplest: a mysteriously damp deck-chair, the mixed smell of musk and decay rising from a girl's T-shirt – straightforward, but aptly uneasy.

Pulling sense and a story from a stream of fleshy details, Colette writes about languour without sluggishness, and despair without its whine. *Duo*, first published in France in 1934, gives a tremble-by-tremble account of the crumbling of a marriage which results in the husband's suicide; *Le Toutounier* (1939) follows the widow back to her determinedly slap-happy sisters, and watches them prepare to leave her alone again. Both stories are more bracing than their subject-matter might suggest. The lush quiverings of *Duo* are spiced by the asperity of a spider-like maid whose 'miserly springs' of eyes pounce triumphantly on crumpled handkerchiefs and broken vases; the sisters in *Le Toutounier* suffer but don't sag – conforming to their strict code of frivolity, silence and irony, they can always whistle across the street for coffee from the café. Instructions about man-weariness and womanly nobility – 'Michel, don't ever do anything so dangerous as deciding what makes a woman feel proud or not' – are less helpful than such examples of constant energetic attentiveness.

'In this school I knock, but do not enter,' breathes the narrator of *The Glass Zoo* – a novel whose unwieldiness is not altogether helped by James McNeish's fondness for such hissingly terse sentences. A young New Zealander enters the 'steely den' of a London comprehensive, unfettered by previous teaching experience, and sporting the codelessness of the colonial. Quick to penetrate the more obvious absurdities of classroom lore, he encounters more murkiness when he champions the cause of a retarded boy surrounded by rumours about caning, theft and the murder of a master. Rooftop scramblings and many whispered threats take place before it is finally discovered that the boy is dyslexic, loyal and very clever, the staff are shifty and the educational system is wasteful. Some thrills are pulled off in the process, but the initially convincing sketch of the unplaceable boy suffers as a result. *The Glass Zoo* trades too heavily on the notion that drugs, muggings and the start of comprehensive education constituted an era.

More successful on the television than in print, James Mitchell's *When the Boat Comes In* speaks of grime, cobbles, shell-shock, the 'hard muscles' and unbending morals of miners, and the scrupulousness and clean deal tables of their wives. It has an engaging hero, a lot of moral fervour and lashings of sentimentality.

Dannie Abse

Watching a Cloud

A lacy mobile changing lazily
its animals, unstable faces, till
I imagine an angel, his vapours sailing
asleep at different speeds. My failing:

to see similes, cloud as something other.
Is all inspiration correspondences?
Machinery of cloud and angel both are silent,
both insubstantial. Neither violent.

And, truly, if one shining angel existed
what safer than the camouflage of a cloud?
There's deranged wind up there. God its power!
Let me believe in angels for an hour.

Let sunlight fade on walls and a huge blind
be drawn faster than a horse across this field.
I want to be theological, stare through
raw white angel-fabric at holy bits of blue.

Let long theatrical beams slant down
to stage-strike that hill into religion. Me too!
An angel drifts to the East, its edges burning;
sunny sunlight on stony stone returning.

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Schadenfreudian

Plunder *Old Vic*
The Ik *Round House*
Judgement *Royal Court*

One of the peculiarities of the Ugandan Ik, of whom more in a moment, is that they laugh hilariously at each other's misfortune or discomfort – and who are we to patronise them for their callousness? Off we set from Chelsea, Hampstead and our other native reserves to a tribal gathering at Waterloo last week, and there we reacted in precisely the same way to the sight of an old man disappearing down a ladder and through a conservatory roof to what we later learned was his death. Just afterwards, a fat lady leapt out of bed and ran about the room squawking that she'd been robbed; and still we laughed. Farce is rarely kind-hearted, but Ben Travers's *Plunder* is harsher than most of its ilk, and not only because of passing incidents like these. It is populated by predators, all after richer pickings than those usually found in bedrooms. The threat it holds over its two heroes' heads is not embarrassment and a wifely wigging, as in *Rookery Nook, Cuckoo in the Nest* and other farces of infidelity. It is at best prison, at worst 'the rope'. To be sure, neither alternative actually materialises but, equally certainly, there's much fun and frisson to be had contemplating the squirming nerves that afflict the weaker partner-in-crime as the police home in on him. As Rochefoucauld said, and Old Vic audiences would have to agree, we all possess enough strength to bear the ill-fortune of others.

Our laughter, intermittent at first, consistent by the end, suggests that the play hasn't dated since those giddy nights at the Aldwych 50 years ago. But there are ways in which it has done so, just a bit. Rich old Hewlett's housekeeper first marries, then buries him, thus disinheriting his granddaughter and displeasing the girl's fiancé, the penniless but pukka D'Arcy Tuck. Freddy Malone, an old schoolchum of Tuck's, is already on hand with larceny in mind and a 'sister' (so-called) whom he dangles invitingly before the ex-housekeeper's son by a previous alliance, Oswald Veal. This young man is described by Travers as 'a modest clerk promoted on the social scale and having a struggle to maintain the dignity of the position', and by D'Arcy as 'a rat', 'a whelk' and 'an awful sort of thing, like an egg'. Trevor Ray, who plays him at the Old Vic, seems equally uncomfortable with his aspirates and with the plus-fours that balloon round his thighs; his mother (Dandy Nichols) has a lurid taste in purples and mauves, and his grizzled uncle (Paul Dawkins) coughs and hawks without once apologising. In other words, the public-school people are ranged against the counter-jumpers, and there's no doubt which side of the barricades Travers and his pop-gun prefer. The Veals must be made to atone for their presumption and the punishment may, if necessary, take the most felonious form. The laws of property may be flouted by the gentlemen, but must be respected by the serfs, and inherited wealth must return to its rightful owners. Raffles may triumph, but Mosca and Tartuffe must fall.

There's a genially anarchic side to Travers, omnipresent in his new *Bed Before Yesterday,* very much a comedy for the Comfort era. But in his 'classic' farces this combines with a wary respect for the social and sexual proprieties: no one actually commits adultery in *Thark,* no one so much as contemplates it in *Cuckoo in the Nest.* Travers was a good pro as well as a gifted humorist, and he knew, none better, that his audiences would reject anything too unconventional – or, indeed, too unfamiliar. They wanted the same names in the same sort of parts: Tom Walls, breezy, sporty, agreeable; Mary Brough, stout, grotesque, wrathful; Ralph Lynn, a grinning duffer in a monocle; Winifred Shotter, the pretty young heroine. The variations on these themes were often very inventive, which is why Travers is still worth reviving, but there must always have been a pleasing predictability about the acting, which is why he is difficult to revive. Laughter came just from seeing 'quicksilver goof' engage with 'cloudy penguin', as J. C. Trewin dubbed Lynn and Walls – and how is a director nowadays to imitate the inimitable? Well, Michael Blakemore wisely cedes defeat there, and compensates for any loss of laughter by providing a lot of comic business not in the original: a siphon, squirting in a footman's face; a butler, grave but trouserless after the robbery; yellow gloves, the sort one uses for washing up, worn by Tuck for the dirty deed and absent-mindedly kept on afterwards.

Actually, the funniest moment of all is added. Travers gives Tuck some chloroform for the waking Mrs Veal. Inevitably, 'he sniffs at the bottle and is almost overpowered himself', an excuse (one presumes) for Lynn to boggle, mug and fatuously totter. Dinsdale Landen, who is our D'Arcy, falls onto the bed beside his victim, totally overpowered, and Frank Finlay, our Freddie, is hard put to revive him at all. It's odd that a director should have to broaden Travers's effects to make them work; but in this scene, more than any other, they *do* work, and it would be piffling to complain, especially as there is nothing mechanical, overblown or gratuitously farcical about the acting itself. Dandy Nichols is, if anything, too understated: her Veal, crumpled and sour, could be more massively aggressive. Mr Landen keeps his silly-ass grins and muddled chatter well within the bounds of plausibility, reminding us, perhaps too definitely, that he is actually a subtle, serious actor. But Finlay is perfect, a sly flasher of smiles that usually contain more teeth than any honest citizen ought to possess. He pads stealthily through act one in blazer and ducks, looking like a used-yacht salesman; he orchestrates the naughty events of act two with enviable cool and a sparkle in the eyes, born leader as well as born cad; and he reaches a magnificent climax in act three, maddening the police with a confident haw-haw-haw whenever their questioning gets ticklish. It is not, of course, Tom Walls. It is sometimes more like Basil Brush. But Finlay makes the part his own, and the effect is to liberate both character and play from the Aldwych formula of yesteryear.

The Ik are a hunting tribe forced by government edict to become farmers, a transformation for which they were and are unfitted. The result, patiently chronicled in Colin Turnbull's *Mountain People,* has been starvation, misery and conduct one would call evil were it not so logical. The old are thrown out to die alone, children killed by parents unable to feed them; love and friendship have disappeared, and a sullen fatalism prevails, occasionally relieved by angry, gloating laughter. Life is finding or stealing food, happiness is eating it, and that is all. This is the subject that has brought Peter Brook back to work in a British theatre for the first time since his *Dream* five years ago, and it goes without saying that all that snap, crackle and theatrical fizz is missing. *The Ik* is spare, dour, drab: a workshop production, perhaps, but from a workshop specialising in sackcloth and ashes: you should expect nothing more visually startling than a despairing woman pulling apart a roughly concocted hut, nothing more aurally arresting than a reedy wail. It is determinedly unemotional, too, even when one child is stumbling about sucking stones or another is being taunted and scorched by a mother with food in her hands. It is perhaps also rather dull, since the facts about the Ik are quickly shown and grasped, and Brook and his six-adult, five-child cast refuse to interpret them for us, still less use them for preaching or polemic.

Still, Brook must have some reason for bringing this doomed clan to our attention. For a time I wondered if he wanted to attack European civilisation in the form of the voyeur Turnbull, who is seen scribbling notes, snapping photos and responding to the suffering around him with pained, helpless frowns. But no: it's soon clear that there isn't much he can do for a people whose totems prevent them moving to better land and whose social habits incline them to gorge what they can and leave the rest to rot. If there is a purpose to the evening, other than that of reminding us of Third-World backwardness and anguish, it may be to suggest that we, too, tend to live beyond our evolutionary means. The Ik are hunters biologically unready to till: we are tillers and delvers unready to become lathe operators, welders, jobbing clerks, financiers and whatever else our industrial splurge makes necessary. Hence

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our alienation, aggression and despair. Somewhere inside Brook's stony tale of the Ik, with their faint memory of a golden age long ago, I detect a Rousseauesque lament for our own lost innocence, here, in Britain.

The Ik haven't yet taken the logic of starvation to its extreme. Cannibalism is, however, the subject of Barry Collins's *Judgement*, a two-and-a-half-hour apologia by a Russian officer who, with one crazed companion, survived 60 days entombed without food or water. They did so by eating five 'brothers', a word used with more than formal emphasis: love and compassion can, it seems, exist in the most brutalising conditions conceivable. After Brook's documentary proof to the contrary, this thesis might seem sentimental; but Mr Collins spares no gruelling detail that would make it less so, and Colin Blakely is at his most gritty, down-to-earth and sturdily plausible throughout the marathon monologue. A few tottered out, green-faced, before the first body had been digested, but the rest of us stayed to admire – and, I think, believe.

Films

David Wilson

Stations West

Breakheart Pass *Odeon, Leicester Square*
New Polish Films *National Film Theatre*

The week's only new commercial offering is Charles Bronson on wheels. An iron horse opera, *Breakheart Pass* is more murder mystery than true Western, though addicts of both genres will find in it only average diversion. Bronson is a Secret Service agent, fronting as a card-sharp and arsonist, on board a train which is supposed to be carrying medical supplies for a diphtheria epidemic in an army fort. The real freight – small surprise – is guns and dynamite, destined for frontier Indians as part of some none-too-explicit deal involving a gold hi-jack. This is the peg for the plot, such as it is. What matters is the train, which duly traverses some pretty mountain scenery, and the fact that its passengers have an alarming tendency to fall off en route.

Just as well, really, since Alistair MacLean's scrambled script assembles more characters at the first station than either the train or comprehension can cope with. There's a marshal (Ben Johnson), a politician (Richard Crenna), a shifty chef and a cavalry troop, to name a few. The cavalry are among those who fall off, in a slow-motion spectacular, to make room for the denouement. This last is a leisurely shoot-out, in which Indians, outlaws, conspirators, army and our man in compartment three all desultorily participate. Jill Ireland, as the lady along for the ride, sensibly shuts herself in her sleeper when the noise starts. Bronson, as ever, is stone-faced, a performer who does not act so much as fail to react. Tom Gries keeps the whole thing, train excepted, on the tracks, though only an occasional studied snowscape reminds one that a few years back he directed that engagingly offbeat Western *Will Penny*.

Those with a taste for less conventional fare might do worse than take in some of the new Polish films to be seen at the National Film Theatre from Monday. A mixed bag includes *Quarterly Balance*, directed by Krysztof Zanussi (who made that icy bit of introspection, *Illumination*), a grandiose epic called *The Deluge* and Wajda's monumental *Land of Promise*, a colourful though to my taste inflated saga of the rise and fall of capitalist enterprise in turn-of-the-century Lodz.

Stop press. Last week the Prime Minister's working party on the future (?) of the British film industry called for a massive injection of capital as a first step towards a genuinely independent home-bred cinema. And so say all of us. But for some the working party's report did not tell us enough about what happens to the films which do get made here against the odds. Independent films need independent cinemas. One such might be the Other Cinema's venture, an ambitious scheme for a new cinema which will also be a club and a conference centre. The organisers' option on the building to house all this expires at the end of February. They need money fast, and if you're in London on Sunday you can do your bit at the Collegiate Theatre, Gordon Street, WC1, where there is a fund-raising double bill. The films are Susan Sontag's *Promised Lands* (at 6.30), a disturbing perspective on the Arab-Israeli impasse, and Marcel Ophuls's documentary on Ulster, *A Sense of Loss*. Don't wait for them on TV: both have been rejected for armchair viewing.

D. M. Thomas

The Substance

What is this substance I call glass
she makes? Invisibility
only one side of which I touch.
When I breathe on it I see,
between myself and all I am,
her name, transparently.

Where we slept the facing wall
is a redoubling of the glass
she makes – invisible
but with a ghost's reflectiveness,
the inside of a crystal ball,
the past and all it meant to us

and means: a painful incompletion
I discover was complete.
Once, the substance came by chance
apart in my hands and gave a fleet
and overwhelmingly recalling
fragrance of her I'll not repeat.

A crack ignorable and sheer
in something I can't get behind
that a wind shakes from roof to floor
catches the noon and makes me blind.
Books allow my hand so near.
Needle and thread I cannot find.

Art

Richard Hewlings

Only Juxtapose

British Painting: 1900-60 *City Art Gallery, Aberdeen*
Body and Soul *City Art Gallery, Liverpool*

Two North British exhibitions, both quite as stimulating as anything currently to be seen in London, reveal two different approaches to a similar subject. The subject is British 20th-century art (largely limited to painting as that word has been understood for most of the last half millennium), one show coming to an end *c.*1960, the point at which the other begins.

In Aberdeen, Julian Spurling and Frank Constantine's anthology of British painting (1900-60), formerly shown in Sheffield, is an exemplary historical essay. It is historical in many senses, not least because they decline to pass judgment on what happens today, but also in that they present all the evidence, of whatever aesthetic quality; and in the more important sense too of re-interpretation, achieved without any sensational connoisseurship or discovery of new evidence. The reinterpretation is both particular and general. Unusual juxtapositions show well-known artists in different lights: one such is among painters of the first world war, Vorticists alongside Academicians, in which the latter make a surprisingly good showing. At Sheffield all these war paintings were shown opposite a row of society portraits, in which John found his rightful place next to Sargent. Nonetheless, however interesting a light it casts on particular artists (John Piper as a pure abstractionist, or Victor Pasmore as a landscape painter), the overall historical model is without doubt more intriguing. To those who, like myself, believed that British art in the 20th century is the story of the reception, in their correct historical order, of successive ideas from first Paris and then New York, it comes as a surprise to learn that the demand for a British *Neue Sachlichkeit* appeared almost cyclically throughout the century, and that, instead of Abstract Art steadily increasing its popularity up to the mid-Sixties, Abstract, Realist and Surrealist art enjoyed alternating and repeated booms.

In the distant south, at Liverpool, Norbert Lynton presents to the hypothetical Martian visitor the state of British art now. By contrast with the Aberdeen show it is neither comprehensive nor objective, but a critical statement by a highly perceptive and intelligent observer. The work he has selected is (with few exceptions) of a particularly seductive visual and intellectual quality, and its choice entirely personal.

The criteria for selection form the subdivisions of this exhibition, and vary from themes of broad human interest (sex, fear, society) to themes so personal that they cannot seriously be taken as useful critical categories: one section shows work which,

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either representationally, by association or by some other metaphysical process 'implies a human presence'. This may operate for spectators other than Mr Lynton. More likely it may not. Interestingly, all Mr Lynton's themes are based on subject matter. Allen Jones, for instance, appears firmly under the heading 'Love and Sex', Francis Bacon under 'Pain'. Yet a few years ago they might have been expected to be based on perception or technique. It suggests that art is less auto-regarding than we have been led to believe over recent years. Indeed, the catalogue is at pains to point out that the exhibition is not just for connoisseurs of contemporary culture. Nonetheless all such who have paid it a visit cannot fail to have been rewarded.

Television

Eric Korn

Down at Eel

As a spectator sport I've always rated angling somewhere between chastity and constipation, but Michael Begg and his team have made fishing coarser and funnier than ever before. *The Fishing Race* (BBC-1, Wednesdays) observes three duos, united only by their saturnine dispositions and mistrust of nature, trying to catch as many varieties as possible within 60 hours. They fish habitats as diverse as the aristocratic, trout-infested Hampshire Test, the open sea, and an ornamental pond at 39 Pembury Villas, Sidcup.

Whatever goes wrong, life is never as bad as their expectations, so these Mithridates take their frustrations philosophically. 'They don't normally grow that small – most are born bigger than that,' remarks one admiringly as his partner throws back some sub-standard finny wretch. Incipient euphoria is quickly dashed: 'This looks like a good eel'; 'There are no good eels.' The series continues till 11 February; by then some sites will have been so richly groundbaited that their ecology will be abnormal till the next ice age.

Eccentricities still more baroque flourished in *Nuts in May* (Play for Today, BBC-1). Roger Sloman played Keith, a vegetarian, sparetime meteorological statistician, self-righteous good citizen, ecological prig, bore and bigot. We wondered how Alison Steadman could stand sharing a tent with him, until we got a close look at her: yogurt-complexioned, petulant and fey. This dire couple bore through a swathe of lovely south Dorset, confidently gauche, cripplingly trite: 'Yes, well, economics are at the root of many of the world's ills.' Nothing much happened, but on a generous scale: a vignette in Cinemascope. There was no script. More precisely, the director, Mike Leigh, generated the script by allowing his actors to improvise their way into the parts. There were equally well-wrought performances from Anthony O'Donnell, Sheila Kelley, Matthew Guiness and Richard Ireson as assorted campers and locals. Eric Allan spent three weeks as a quarryman for a five-minute cameo: like Stanislavsky sending the entire cast of *The Cherry Orchard* to work for six months in a jam factory. I don't care if Mike Leigh believes in the phlogiston theory if he can evoke performances as scrupulously observed, consistent, sculptured and funny as these. The camera-work was witty and easy on the eye, the cutting sharp.

When the Boat Comes In (BBC-1) is set in Twenties Geordieland: 'We're a mining family and we know what it is to be betrayed.' There's a good feeling for place and period, a rather Hentyish morality, and some absorbing acting; James Bolan, the sardonic, decent ex-sergeant, and Susan Jameson, the fierce, bright, activist schoolteacher generated a tense laser-like fire; and this despite exchanges such as: 'Your brother has the chance to turn his back on poverty' – 'Yes, by turning his back on the poor.' It could yet turn out to be the best of the many life-processions currently winding through the box. Meanwhile, in the Rhondda, Dominic Guard has taken over as pubescent Huw, and Sian Phillips is the most beautiful thing on television, with the possible exception of the peregrine falcons in *World About Us* (BBC-2). *Clayhanger* (ATV) still gives me pause. Hilda Lessways is 'about the most enigmatic woman in the whole of English literature', writes Janet Suzman in *TV Times* (which elsewhere quaintly speaks of Hilda Leeways, a subdued pun); 'She is quirky, strange, wild, and utterly unpredictable.' Her debut, all flash and ribcage, was bracing to watch but quirky to the point of neuropathy.

The heroine of *Life and Death of Penelope* (Thames) had a less demanding part, appearing face down in the mud at the start of episode one, not to be seen again. Meanwhile Antony Brown and Matthew Long, as heavy and vivacious 'tec respectively, turn up a superfluity of motives. The locations are modern enough (IS publisher's party, for one), but it's an agreeably old-fashioned, modestly gripping plot; though not half as old-fashioned as the boring *Ellery Queen Whodunit* (BBC-1). Last week, a reporter burst in shouting 'Come on, inspector, give us the lowdown.'

Oh No it's Selwyn Frogitt (Yorkshire) has the amiable Bill Maynard as a comic-book Gargantua round whom things fall apart. Like its hero, the series has intellectual pretensions above its station, but it is not as patronising as the disgusting *Yus, My Dear* (LWT), and it was useful to learn that 'reading the *Times Literary Supplement* can make you blind'. Kenneth Cope's admirable children's serial *Striker* (BBC-1) has just finished: action, grown-up problems, and good, irreverent, schoolboy dialogue. Horizon's *A Fair Share of What Little we Have* (BBC-2) dealt with Tanzania's experiment in using simplified training to produce a cadre of rural medical assistants to do half a doctor's work at a fraction of the cost. It seems to be working, which was the only good news of the week.

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Broadway

Oleg Kerensky

Hot Seats

Why is New York theatre-going so exciting? The electric air of Manhattan gets even more stimulating as one approaches Broadway. It is partly that the seats are so expensive – nearly £9 a stall for a musical on a Saturday night – that sitting in them must be an 'occasion'. It is partly the audience's habit of arriving just as the show is about to start, so that the very fight to get into the theatre contributes to the excitement. And it is even more the fact that everyone working in and around central Manhattan seems to be interested in, and often dependent on, the theatre. Last autumn's strike, which closed all the musicals, crippled the restaurants and nearly ruined the cab drivers. And after a preview of Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures* I was twice asked by strangers on the subway who spotted my programme what the show was like.

I've been equating theatre with musicals. That equation is more appropriate than ever this season. There are scarcely any new plays worth mentioning. *Lampost Reunion* by Louis La Russo II is another in the series of American dramas in which a group of middle-aged people discuss their past, present and future while getting drunk in a bar. Bernard Slade's *Same Time Next Year* is a very professional sex comedy about a couple with an annual date at a California inn; we see their relationship develop and alter over 25 years, and the dialogue is (again) fashionably daring, with detailed discussion of erections, impotence and sexual intercourse. Terrence McNally's *The Ritz,* which has just ended nearly a year's run, is an amusing and fairly traditional farce with the twist that it takes place in a large gay sauna bath and presumes that the audience will know and accept that such establishments thrive in New York. They don't in London; nor, probably, would the play. *Yentl,* by contrast, a very sentimental piece based by Isaac Bashevis Singer and Leah Napolin on one of Singer's stories, skirts over the central problem posed by its heroine's impersonation of a man. She marries and somehow satisfies the other woman but when asked how, merely answers mysteriously, 'There are ways'. It's part *Fiddler on the Roof*, part Women's Lib – Yentl wants to be a Rabbi, which makes her male impersonation all right – and redeemed by Tovah Feldshuh's sincere and amusing Yentl.

But it's the dance and musicals that really thrive. Three large theatres, two opposite each other on Broadway and one at Lincoln Center, were packed with ballet and modern dance, and I hope to discuss some of the dancers and the new works before long. The only tickets 'hotter' than for Baryshnikov with Ballet Theatre were for the three smash-hit musicals, *A Chorus Line, Chicago* and *The Wiz,* which are all loaded with dance. They are taken, and take themselves, seriously. My complaint about *Chorus Line* is that it takes itself *too* seriously, while being based on an entirely false premise – that an audition for a new musical could become a psychoanalytic session at which the boys and girls are made publicly to discuss their relations with their families, their sex lives and their secret hopes and fears. Most of the stories they tell are trite – and rather lengthy, only occasionally bursting into appropriate song or rousing dance. No costumes, only practice dress, and no decor, only mirrors, but the cast blaze with talent and sincerity.

Chicago is closer to traditional Broadway razzmatazz, with lifts, revolves, moving platforms, a band on stage and two superstars, Gwen Verdon and Chita Rivera. It's by the team responsible for *Cabaret* – John Kanter, Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse – and shows the Chicago of the Twenties as something like a Brecht-Weill-Isherwood Berlin. There is just enough satirical plot – about murderesses conspiring to evade justice – some electrifying songs and dances, and the now obligatory bits of sexy dialogue. I saw it twice and for my money it's the most enjoyable show in New York.

The Wiz is enjoyable too, but like a British Christmas pantomime, which of course doesn't exist over there. It's an all-black version of *The Wizard of Oz,* with new book and music, and it's full of vitality and spectacle. A writer in the *New York Times* has proposed its significance for black people: Dorothy's departure for Oz apparently represents the flight from the South and her desire to return to Kansas symbolises black disillusion with white society.

Mere escapism being unfashionable musicals are desperately trying to be about something. *Pacific Overtures* is an ambitious and highly original attempt to tell the story of Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan entirely through Japanese eyes, with a virtually all-male Japanese cast performing in Kabuki style. The first half is clever and interesting but not particularly entertaining; the second is more like revue, with British, French and Russian admirals singing parodies of Gilbert and Sullivan, Offenbach and Slav folksong, and with a very ambiguous finale, a chorus about the way Japan has now learnt from the West and is underselling us on world markets. Is too much being asked of the musical?

There *are* two unashamedly old-fashioned ones: *Shenandoah,* a spectacular tear-jerker of the Civil War, and *Very Good Eddie,* a charming revival of Jerome Kern's 1915 show, with some amusing period dances. There is also a fashion for revue-style anthologies, like *A Musical Jubilee* in which Cyril Ritchard compères Lillian Gish and five other stars in fully staged songs and sketches of the past hundred odd years. *By Bernstein,* brilliantly performed in a fake café-setting, could not persuade anyone that Lennie's 'lost' songs were worth finding and *Me and Bessie,* in which a plump negro singer called Linda Hopkins impersonated Bessie Smith, was more concert than show. Oh, *Candide* only just ended and *Pippin* was still running. Who said Broadway was dead?

Weekend Competition

No 2396 **Set by Nom de Pseud**

Let's have one of the following done as a single haiku (stick to English, please): *Paradise Lost, The Iliad, The Odyssey, The Aeneid, Beowulf, The Divine Comedy.* Seventeen syllables by 6 February.

Result of No 2393 **Set by Tourvel**

We wanted a translation of Philippe Jaccottet's *'La Patience'*:

Dans les carte à jouer abattues sous la lampe
comme les papillons écroulés poussiéreux,
à travers le tapis de table et la fumée,
je vois ce qu'il vaut mieux ne pas voir affleurer
lorsque le tintement de l'heure dans les verres
annonce une nouvelle insomnie, la croissante
peur d'avoir peur dans le resserrement
du temps,
l'usure du corps, l'éloignement des défenseurs.
Le vieil homme écarte les images passées
et, non sans réprimer un tremblement, regarde
la pluie glacée pousser la porte du jardin.

Report **by Blackbird**

So we didn't specify English: a fiver to W. S. Brownlie for taking advantage of the situation, and impressing our foreign editor, called in for her opinion. Otherwise there were limerick versions ('Glasses tinkle a warning/A new fear is yawning . . .'), songs of low life ('I'm creaking like a garden gate/Out in the pissing rain . . .'), free verse and lines that read like a paste-up of Larousse. It *was* a difficult poem: flat, bleak and dotted with problem points: *'non sans'* – fifty losers translated this accurately but murderously as 'not without'; none of the winning entries did. *'Affleurer'* was largely sidestepped, though not by Peter Scupham whose scrupulous but also inventive version is the outright winner and takes £7. A bumper entry from all our friends, allies, props, guardians, protectors, *défenseurs* – wish we could print more, but £5 to each runner-up.

In the playing cards, dishevelled
under lampligh
As broken butterflies settling into dust,
Across the table-cloth, the smoke, I am aware
Of something best unseen drawing
itself abreas
As the passing bell which sets the
glasses tinglin
Tells of the sleeplessness to come, the
swelling fea
Of suffering fresh fear in the days' contraction
In shaling flesh, the desertion of the sentries
The old man wards them off, the
long nostalgias
There is a tremor at the heart to still.
His glance
Turns to where chill rain drives against the
garden door

PETER SCUPHAM

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Cards in the lamplight,
Broken butterflies crumbling to dust
On a smoke-wreathed table,
Tell what is better left unsaid,
Time tolling insomnia
In a wine glass, fear
Of being afraid in Time's grip,
The body's failure, departure of friends.
The old man turns from past images,
Quiets his trembling hands, watches
Cold rain beat at the garden gate.

T. GRIFFITHS

Like butterflies that all too soon
Must fall to dust, the cards bestrewn
Dejectedly upon the baize,
Across the lamp-illumined haze,
Transmit a message chill and vatic:
The safer sight's the astigmatic,
When glasses, by insistent clinking,
Assert the *angst* of daylight's shrinking
Of body ragged, rampart-stripped,
By very fear of fear now gripped.
With age's advent, men discard
The pictured past, and must regard
Idyllic doors (not sans a shiver)
Beneath the hail's bombardment quiver.

PAUL PITCHROFT

Like dusty-winged dejected butterflies.
Under the lamp the playing cards are spread
Across the level cloth, and through the haze
I read things that were better left unread,
While the clock strikes, and every
glass replies,
Sleep will not come, but only rising fears
Of being afraid as limbs disintegrate
And sentinels are silenced by the years.
The old man turns from dreams of
long-past days
And watches, holding still his trembling dread,
The ice-hard rain that stirs the garden gate.

E. S. GOODWILL

Beneath the lamp the scattered cards
lie lifeless under curling smoke
like butterflies crumbled to dust.
I see but am afraid to look,
afraid to hear the bells of time
ringing in an empty glass,
afraid of night, the death of sleep,
afraid of fear, the days that pass.
My body sags, the troops withdraw
as old men flee the ghosts they hate,
and shamed and shuddering I watch
the iced rain punishing the garden gate.

DAVID DOUBTFIRE

Spielkarten wie Schmetterlinge gefallen,
Staubbedeckt, auf dem Tuch hingestreckt.
Darin sehe ich (doch wäre es besser nicht)
Durch rauchiges Licht, die Auflösung.
In den Gläsern klingt die Zeit:
Ahnung der Schlaflosigkeit, der Furcht
Vor der Quetschung der Zeit
Vor der Abnützung des Körpers
Vor dem Abschied der Verteidiger.
Der Alte zerstreut die verblichenen Bilder
Und sieht, indem er ein Zittern zwar hemmt,
Wie das Gartentor offen schwingt
Vor dem regenkalten Wind.

W. S. BROWNLIE

Assiac

Chess Board

No 1366 **Tough at the Top**

With Hort (last year's winner) meeting Bronstein in the final round and Uhlmann pitched against Taimanov who (also unbeaten) lagged 1½ points behind it was quite pleasing that three draws led to a triple-tie. They were well contested, and the draw the logical conclusion of an impregnable build-up. Not all the many draws of the tournament were seriously contested, and our own contenders were guilty of far too many agreed when barely out of the opening. Amends were made by Miles in his very tough and creditable game against Sigurjonsson. Having missed a win in the time scramble round about move 40 Tony fought on for over 100(!) moves – the game runs to 145 – defending an uphill struggle in a Q & P ending and finally getting away with a draw. In the last round too Miles held the great Korchnoi ferociously to a draw of more than 80 moves. At one time near the end of the tournament Tony seemed to have a reasonable chance of the GM norm, but he came a cropper, when Black against Keene in round 13, Keene's first win after far too many draws.

1) Ktf3,Ktf6; 2) c4,c5; 3) Ktc3,Ktc6; 4) e3,e6; 5) d4,d5; 6) cd:,Ktd5:; 7) Bd3,cd:; 8) ed:,Be7; 9) 0-0,0-0; 10) Re1,Ktf6; 11) Bg5,Ktb4; 12) Bb1,b6; 13) Kte5,Bb7; 14) Re3,g6; 15) Rg3,Rc8?? 'Makes no sense', said Tony after the game. As a matter of fact, it is now hopelessly lost. Black (quoth Miles) should have played . . . Re8 or . . . Ktc6; **16) Bh6,Re8; 17) a3,Ktc6; 18) Ktg6:!!,hg;** Nothing else to save him; **19) Bg6:,fg:; 20) Qb1!!** Only winning move. Obviously both Qd3? and Qc2? would be defeated by the Black QKt, **Kte5.** At least a try; **21) de:,Kte4; 22) Kte4:,Kh7; 23) Ktf6†,Bf6:; 24) Qg6:†,Kh8; 25) Bg7†,Bg7:; 26) Qg7:††.**

To have David Bronstein in a tournament invariably involves joyful palpitations. In the first round, Black against Kaplan, he produced this beauty.

1) e4,e6; 2) d4,d5; 3) Ktc3,Ktf6; 4) Bg5,de:; 5)Kte4:,Be7; 6) Bf6:,gf:; Not exactly 'orthodox', but it leads to interesting complications. **7) Ktf3,Ktd7; 8) Qd2,c5; 9) d5,f5; 10) de:,fe:; 11) ed:†,Qd7:; 12) Qc3,0-0; 13) Ktd2,Qf5; 14) 0-0-0,Qf2:; 15) Kte4:,Qf4†; 16) Ktd2,Bg4; 17) Re1,Bg5; 18) Bd3,Rae8; 19) Ref1,Qe3; 20) h3,Be2; 21) Rf5,Bh6; 22) Be2:,Qc3:; 23) bc:,Re2:; 24) Rd5,Rd2:; 25) Rd2:,Rd8; 26) Rd1,c4†;** and White, hopelessly in 'zugzwang', resigned.

The tournament was smoothly organised under Ritson Morry's efficient stewardship. Thanks are due to Zetter's International Pools Ltd but for whose £5,000 we would hardly have had a Hastings Congress this year. More next week.

In search of some vintage Uhlmann the 4-pointer for beginners is a game position in which White had just carelessly bared his baseline by Rc7, a blunder asking for drastic punishment. For 6 ladder-points **B** is a win enforced on the third move by a subtle if obvious manoeuvre. Helpful hint: Novotny! **C** (for 7) is a draw. In the main variation a stalemate is achieved on the fifth move. Usual prizes. Entries by 2 February.

A: Mädler-Uhlmann 1963: /6k1/pbR2p1p/1p1p2pQ/4r3/6qP/6Kt1/P4PP1/6K1/.

B: K. Behting 1921: /8/1p6/p5b1/8/3Kt4/r7/p4PrR/k1K2B2/.

C: Henri Rinck: b5K1/6P1/8/4B3/2Kt5/8/5p1p/3k4/.

Report on No 1363 *Set 2 January*

A: 1) Ra3!! (if the Kt is lured from defensive duties at d6 White's 2) Rf1 will be unanswerable), **Qb1; 2) Ra7:!!** (Unacceptable again on account of 3) Re8††), **Rf8; 3) Rf7!!** (Taboo again), **Rd8; 4) Rf1,** etc.

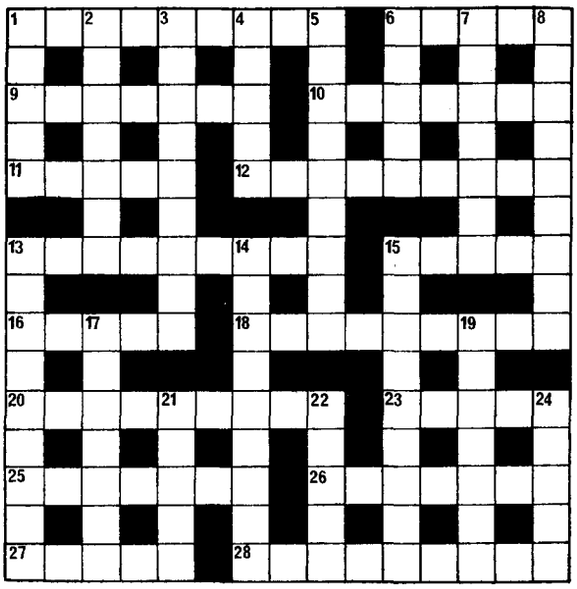
B: 1) a7,Ba7:; 2) c7,Ktb6; 3) Kg1!,Ktc8†; 4) Kh1!, and if . . . Ktb6 the P queens and forces stalemate.

C: 1) c7,fg:†; 2) Kg4:,Bc4!; 3) c8=Kt†! (c8=Q?), **Kb8; 4) a7†!** and wins the Bishop.

Not all that easy. Prizes: E. Allan, M. Cortacars, J. R. Johnstone (all the way from Australia) J. T. Naylor, T. G. Whitworth.

Weekend Crossword 1148

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1148, New Statesman Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 3 Feb.



ACROSS

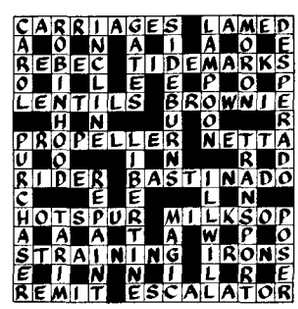
1. Performance of dialect actors? (9).
6. Refuse to cut an inch off a bird (5).
9. 'Most —— of mourners, weep again' (Shelley) (7).
10. It is heavenly in the shade of a tree (7).
11. Lowest people hold right to be forwards (5).
12. Make parsons resign as a sign of penitence (9).
13. Such tents may be adapted for use in trees (9).
15. Polish place in London (5).
16. Unsuitable for a young lady (5).
18. God and the farmer as provider of drink (9).
20. Sounds as if woman's downfall is to listen in (9).
23. 'Then imitate the action of the ——' (*K. Henry V*) (5).
25. A letter against wine (7).
26. Comfort for prisoners including the sick (7).
27. Notice an afterthought penetrates slowly (5).
28. Organ observed and singled out (9).

DOWN

1. Collisions of politician in transport (5).
2. Notice there are none born to wait on others (7).
3. Kills a lot of animals climbing in the fruit (9).
4. A place in the car less uncomfortable than usual (5).
5. Precedents for cricket-bags? (9).
6. Involving the third power (5).
7. Though fat, I am prepared to be photographed on the commercial (7).
8. Here ferns grow wild and this helps one to revive (9).
13. Grows together in rearranging close case (9).
14. Infra dig sap? (9).
15. Twisted tin in bulb makes a spark (9).
17. Oral advice? (7).
19. Record of progress overseas? (7).
21. They show passage of time and in seconds (5).
22. Musician with piano in place of entertainment (5).
24. Cut down a bob in what is the opposite of expensive (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1146



Prizewinners to No 1146

R. Mercer (London NW5)
J. R. Rose (Brunei)
G. A. Coulson (Diss)

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Further details of both posts and application forms from — The Administrative Secretary, Age Concern England, Bernard Sunley House, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL.

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MALE, 35, just recovered from marriage failure, now lonely and in need of conversation, seeks attractive, intelligent lady 25-40, who must be interested in literature and the arts for friendship. S.London/ Surrey. Hates children. Box 2809.

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GENTLEMAN WRITER, 52, living West of England, seeks lady from Mediterranean area, living England, for companionship/ marriage. Box 2664.

MAN, 43, single, English, living and working in WC1, seeks adventurous but homeloving woman for lasting relationship leading to marriage. Box 2790.

WIDOWER, early 50s, Continental origin, seeks friendship with attractive lady, approx. 35-50. Interests incl. motoring holidays, films, theatre. Box 2773.

MALE GRADUATE, young 38, London. Seeks affectionate, intelligent woman. Aim, meaningful relationship. Box 2772.

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NEW STATESMAN
Vol. 91 No. 2340

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Theatres

CITIZENS' THEATRE, GLASGOW presents, Citizens' Theatre Company in 'Mirandolline' by Goldoni. 28-31 Jan. 041-429 0022.

EMBASSY THEATRE. Swiss Cottage. 'The Homecoming'. 4, 5 & 6 Feb. at 7.30 p.m. *'Little Murders' by Jules Feiffer. 11,* 12 & 13 Feb. at 7.30 p.m. Box Office open 2-6 p.m. Tel. 722 8186.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. 'Cakewalk' - an entertainment with music. 8 p.m. Sats 5 & 8 p.m. Adm 90p & £1.50.

NEW END (Hampstead Tube) 435 4116. Richard Crane's 'Clownmaker' a story of Nijinsky, Diaghilev and the Ballets Russe. 8 p.m. nightly (not Mondays).

OLD VIC. National Theatre. 928 7616. Ton., Mon. & Tues. 7.30, Tom. 2.15 & 7.30. 'Phaedra Britannica', by Tony Harrison, after Racine's 'Phèdre', Wed. 7, Thurs. 2, 'Hamlet', Thurs. at 8, 'Happy Days'.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. From 19 Dec. twice daily at 2.30 and 7.30. 'Dick Whittington'.

Exhibitions

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Entertainments

NATIONAL POETRY CENTRE. 21 Earls Court Sq., SW5. Tonight 23 Jan. 7.30 p.m John Welch and Peter Philpot. Fri. 30 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Diz Willis and Lol Coxhill.

AFRICA CENTRE. Wed. 28 Jan. at 7 p.m. Afro-Caribbean Evening with poetry by Dau Adulpha, Faustin Charles, T-Bone Wilson and Taiwo Ajai. Drumming and guitar playing. Admission 50p. 38 King St. WC2. 836 1973.

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A lecture entitled: 'The Geography of Modernisation: A Radical Reassessment, will be given by Professor Edward Soja (University of California) on 27 January 1976 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HP at 5.30 p.m. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

AFRICA CENTRE: 38 King Street, WC2. 836 1973. 'African Leaders: Houari Boumedienne.' Talk on President of Algeria by HE Mr. L. Brahimi, the Algerian Ambassador in London. Tues. 27 January 6.30 p.m. Adm. 40p; Students 25p. Traditional African Dance/drumming Workshop. Practice and demonstration with Adwe. 10 a.m.-4.30 p.m. Sat. 31 January. £4, book in advance: limited numbers. African lunch available at £1.00.

TOWARDS A NEW MIDDLE AGE. History and Philosophy, political analysis and future projection. Public Talk. Wed. 28 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Ent. 20p. Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Ashley Place. Org. New Acropolis.

NATIONAL WORKING WOMENS' Charter Conference. To be held on 10/11 April in Coventry, open to all groups and organisations supporting the Charter, and to which each organisation may send 4 delegates. Crèche available. The main themes of the conference will be a) Perspectives and strategy. b) Amendments to the Charter. c) Regional & National structure of the Campaign. Details of the Conference will be sent to all those on the Charter mailing list by mid-Jan. (£1.50 for one year's subscription), all others interested in participating in the Conference can obtain further details and application forms from W.W.C.C. 49 Lowther Hill, London SE28 1PZ.

ACTIVITIES IN HILLEL HOUSE, 1/2 Endsleigh St., WC1. Wednesday 28 Jan. 6 p.m. 'Sociology of Anglo-Jewry'. Neighbourhood and Class led by Dr Barry Kosmin. Thursday, 29 Jan. 8 p.m. discussion 'The Anti-Zionist Resolution in the UN and its significance', led by Benny Wenger, British Histadrut Representative.

YOUNG MAPAM (Socialist Zionist Movement) are having a meeting on 'The Law, Legal Aid and the Community', which will be addressed by Simon Lesson, Advisor at Paddington Law Centre, at 8 p.m. at 37 Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6 on Sunday, 25 January.

'EXORCISING THE INSTITUTIONAL Imperative': James Robertson. Sun. 25 Jan. 11 a.m. Sunday Forum, 25 Jan. 3 p.m. 'What is Wrong with the English Theatre?': Jonathan Miller. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'Is Dr Coggan Right?' Tues. 27 Jan. 7 p.m. Debate: 'That the Archbishop of Canterbury is on the Side of the Angels'. South Place, Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4AL. 01-242 8032/3.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 24 Jan, 3 p.m. 'Open Day.' Tues. 27 Jan. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 28 Jan. 6.30 p.m. – 'Mahayana Buddhism' and 'Theravada Buddhism' – two separate Study & Discussion Groups. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

BUDDHISM. Talk and discussion. Sundays 4.30 p.m. BBA, The Meeting House, 120 Heath St. Hampstead. Sun. 1 Feb. Ven. Mahanama: Early Buddhist literature – structure and content. Tel. 388 4589.

THEOSOPHY. Public Talk & Questions. Sun. 25 Jan. 8 p.m. Free. 'Man's Duality' S.a.e. for programme, book list and literature. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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